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**BIBLE PROPHECIES AND
THE PLAIN MAN**

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BIBLE PROPHECIES AND
THE
PLAIN MAN

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO THE PRESENT WAR

BY
MARR MURRAY

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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INTRODUCTION

HAVE the Scriptures anything to tell us in regard to the present time? Is there any veiled reference to the conflict that has been raging since last August to be found in the Book of Revelation, in Daniel, or in the writings of any of the other prophets? These are fascinating questions and are being asked on all sides. The Bible is the Christian's refuge. In times of difficulty, doubt, and trouble he turns instinctively to the Book for comfort and guidance. And he finds what he seeks; the Bible never fails. Is there one amongst us who has not at some time or other had the fog of perplexity cleared away by the radiance of the Word?

It is that blessed characteristic which makes the Bible unique among the world's books. It never fails those who believe in it. Look into any of the sacred books of other religions, into the Oahpse, into the Popul Vuh. Do they give light and guidance in modern difficulties? Compare their musty and sterile dullness with the vivid Word of God. It is as if you compare a stagnant, turgid pool with a leaping, crystal stream. They are old and bear every sign of their age. They were written for and by people who lived many years ago and under very different conditions from what obtain to-day. They have no message for us. They were human, therefore they have died. But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. It is applicable to all time and to the needs of all peoples. It is Divine.

We may therefore expect that the Scriptures do contain some reference to the events which are now convulsing the world. Although we are living in the midst of turmoil and may in consequence have a distorted view of the events which mean so much to us, and an exaggerated idea of their importance, yet we may say with certainty that never has there been such a war as the present. Never before has war been so world-wide. The daughter nations of Britain are under arms ; in Europe, Africa, Asia, and on every sea and ocean the fight is being waged. Never have such immense armies been massed one against another ; never have armies been equipped with such marvellous instruments of destruction. Never before has human ingenuity attained such hellish limits. Think of the monster siege guns with which Germany has battered down the strongest fortifications within the course of a few hours. Think of the marvels of our battleships whose guns can with comparative accuracy hurl death a dozen miles. Think of the submarines with which we are fighting under the waters, of the aeroplanes with which we fight in the air, and of the airships which drop death and destruction from the clouds.

No, there has never been such a war ; therefore, in our hopes and fears, we shall doubtless find some comfort and profit in the study of the Scriptures.

There is a widespread notion that the study of prophecy is unpractical and profitless, a fit hobby for cranks. A moment's thought will show how erroneous is that notion. One-third of the Bible consists of prophecy, and Christ told us to "search the Scriptures," not merely a portion of them. The apostle Peter warns us that we shall do well to take heed of the "more sure word of prophecy," as a light shining in a dark place until the dawn of day. Is it unpractical to make use of a good lantern on a dark

night when traversing a difficult and unknown road ?

Prophecy is the lantern which lights for us the dark road of human history. "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it," was the command given to Habakkuk. The purpose of prophecy is to reveal to the initiated and to obscure from the uninitiated. "Make it plain" was the mark of the prophet's work. But the second part of the command constitutes a very important qualification. It was not the popular misquotation: "that he who runs may read." Prophecy requires something more than a passing glance. It needs reading, study, and much honest labour before the sure course and steady footing in the race are assured.

The sureness of prophecy is vouched for by God Himself. It is certain that God communicated to the prophets the words which they set down. Often they did not understand and could not explain the meaning of those words, but they knew that they came from God. "The word of the Lord came unto me," says Ezekiel. The phrase, "the Lord spake unto Moses," occurs over thirty times in the Book of Leviticus. "The Word of God came unto John," says Luke. And throughout the Old and New Testaments there is abundant evidence that the prophets and apostles were thoroughly convinced that they received their communications direct from the Almighty. "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for all good works," says St. Paul.

Nevertheless the prophetic portions of Scripture have received but comparatively scant attention. Various reasons have been alleged for this neglect. The inherent difficulty of the prophetic writings has

deterred many from the study. Others cite the multitude of widely differing solutions offered by equally earnest interpreters, and ask how can good be expected from the attempted treading of such a maze. There is some justification for both objections. The prophetic writings are necessarily obscure. For certain very good reasons Christ never mentioned in so many words the actual history and length of the dispensation, neither did the Holy Ghost reveal them to the apostles. It was necessary to keep alive the expectation of the second coming, to encourage the faithful in constant watchfulness, to cheer them with hope, and to weaken the power of temptation by insisting on the uncertainty and evanescence of things. How else could the first generation of Christians have endured under the iron heel of Rome? The prospect of two thousand years of persecution, death, decay, and spiritual corruption was mercifully veiled from the sight of the early martyrs. They saw only the return of their Lord, and for their own sakes it was decreed that they should not have the experience and knowledge necessary to interpret the prophecies. But with us it is different. Two thousand years have rolled by, the sands of time are running low; we can look back across the years and discern something of the truth that lies in the words of the prophets.

True, many have sought to interpret the Scriptures, and have proved, each to his own satisfaction, many theories. The besetting sin of nearly every writer on prophecy is a lack of tolerance for the opinions of others and a disposition to confound the prophet with the interpreter. They forget the limitations of humanity. They catch a ray of the Truth and straightway jump to the conclusion that the full effulgence has been revealed to them. They assert this, that, and the other theory with a wealth of dogmatism; they even go to the extent of predicting the date of

certain events, dates which are seldom fulfilled and which to the unthinking are signs that prophecy is a profitless study.

It is hoped that these sins have been avoided in the following pages ; and that the various views have been stated with tolerance and fairness. We must remember that the best human interpretation of prophecy is but an attempt to explain the Divine. No more can be said of any theory than that it seems to be more probable than another. The object of this work is not to prove any theory or to favour any school of interpretation. Rather it is to set forth the various theories that have been advanced and the considerations in support of them, keeping in mind always the present struggle of the nations. The purpose is not to prove, but to suggest, to help students of the Word and not presumptuously to attempt to lead them.

There are objections doubtless to all the theories that are mentioned. Some of them are contradictory. But they have all been advanced by earnest interpreters. They are worthy of respect and consideration, even by those who do not agree with them. Especially is it hoped that the work will prove valuable and suggestive to those who have been urged by the great events now happening to look into the study of prophecy for the first time. Such students are entering upon a vast field, and a wide, comprehensive view of the expanse will be of more value to them than a narrow and restricted view.

The field may appear somewhat overgrown with tangled brushwood, but one thing is promised to those who attempt to pick their way through. The student of prophecy is an incorrigible optimist. There may be wars, with their fears, hopes, and miseries ; there may be persecutions, famines, and

plagues. But he knows that away back of all things is that glorious vision that will one day be realised, the vision that enabled the early martyrs to meet their fate with happy fortitude, the vision of the second coming of Christ for those who believe in Him.

PART I

THE PROPHETS AND THE PRESENT DAY

CHAPTER I

THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

ALTHOUGH no two interpreters of prophecy can be said to be in complete accord one with the other, yet they all can be grouped into four schools of thought.

First, there is the Spiritualising school. This denies that the Apocalypse has any definite meaning. It regards it merely as a book describing, in extremely mystical language, not events that are going to happen, but the principles of God's actions. This system is obviously vague and of little practical use to the inquirer. It has never had any followers of eminence, and may be dismissed from further consideration as unprofitable and unfounded.

The second system, the Preterist, considers that the prophecies of the Apocalypse have already been fulfilled in the downfall of the Jewish nation and the old Roman Empire. According to this school of thought, Nero was the Antichrist and the events pictured in the Book of Revelation actually happened during the first six centuries of the era. It even goes so far as to assert that Christ has already returned for His saints and that the first resurrection is past. The holders of the theory lay stress on such expressions as "a little while" in John xvi. 16, "Behold, I come quickly," and "the coming of the Lord is at hand." They argue that either Christ wilfully deceived the apostles or else that He must have returned at about the time of the destruction of

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Jerusalem, although there is no trace or tradition of any such return. The fallacy of this argument is obvious. The Preterists confound typical events with the great happenings which those types foreshadow. Christ regarded and spoke of the duration of the present dispensation as One who knew the meaning of Eternity. To Him a thousand years are but as a day, and the intervals between His two comings but a little while. He expressly told the disciples that "it was not for them to know times or seasons." Hence He employed a certain amount of mystery, sometimes speaking of His return as in a little while, sometimes hinting at a long absence, as in the parables of the Talents and the Pounds. The same uncertainty is noticeable in the apostolic writings. Mystery was necessary in order that the believers might endure persecution and maintain their attitude of readiness and expectation. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest suddenly He find you sleeping."

Another passage upon which the Preterists rely is Matt. xxiv. 34: "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished." From this they argue that the second advent and the first resurrection must have taken place during the generation living at the time when the words were spoken. Here again is the error of confounding the typical event with the great happening. The Transfiguration and the destruction of Jerusalem were typical pictures of the two stages of the second coming of Christ. The prophecy had a preliminary partial fulfilment in the time of the generation then living, but for the complete fulfilment it is necessary to take a wider view.

It is obvious that the Preterist view lacks spiritual

insight and regards the Apocalypse too much as a merely human production. The system, which originated in the sixteenth century, has very few followers to-day. Like the Spiritualising system, it abstracts all practical interest from prophecy, and may be dismissed as unprofitable.

It is between the remaining two schools of interpretation that the student must choose. These systems are the Historical and the Futurist. On many points they are opposed, and each can boast eminent and earnest interpreters.

The main feature of the Historical system is continuity. In dealing with the apocalyptic visions, for instance, its supporters assert that the prophecies foreshadow events which are spread over a period reaching continuously from the time of the prophet down to the last event referred to in the prophecy. In other words, that portions of the prophecy have been fulfilled and are matters of history, that other portions are being fulfilled, and that others remain to be fulfilled in the future. They regard the Book of Revelation as a complete history of the Church and its enemies from the time of writing down to the end of the world.

The Futurists, on the other hand, assert that the events prefigured in apocalyptic prophecy lie wholly in the future and will not take place until the actual time of the second advent. The theory has been described as "an instant plunge into the distant future of the consummation." It denies the continuity of revelation and interposes a gap, maintaining that events happening during the greater part of the dispensation are not referred to in the Scriptures at all. Its followers hold that the prophet's glance into the future entirely overlooked the nineteen centuries of the present era. As when mountain peaks stand out together on the horizon, seeming almost to touch,

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although there may be a wide expanse of river and field between, so there loomed upon the prophet's vision the events of times now long past by and of times still future. Therefore the two advents of Christ are brought seemingly together in the Old Testament. The surface currents of human responsibility and human guilt are unaffected by the deep-lying tide of the foreknowledge and sovereignty of God. The Jews who rejected their long-promised King and Saviour were not the victims of an inexorable fate which dragged them to their doom, but free agents who used their freedom to crucify the Lord. "His blood be upon us and upon our children" was their cry, and for eighteen centuries punishment has been visited upon them.

Moreover, as Sir Robert Anderson has pointed out, the gap theory has saved the Futurists from falling into the trap which has ensnared several interpreters of the Historical school. There is an obvious danger in carrying a zeal for continuity to an extreme length. That danger is the temptation to attempt prediction with insufficient and inaccurate data. Many earnest expositors of the Historical school have been led to assert that certain events will happen on certain dates. The second advent has been confidently stated to happen at several dates now long past; for instance, Elliot was sure that it would occur in 1865. These predictions are obviously mischievous and have done much to bring the study of prophecy into disrepute. Nevertheless, as will be shown in the next chapter, much may be gained by the study of the chronology of the prophecies on Historical lines. Without dogmatically asserting that any event will happen on any date, it is quite possible to show that we may expect certain events to happen in the near or distant future. The dates must be regarded as indications and not as fixed prognostications.

The Historical school also hold that the language employed in apocalyptical prophecy is mainly symbolical, and cites instances in which God Himself, in giving prophecies, interpreted the symbolical terms used in order to provide a guide for the discovery of the other symbols. The Futurists, on the other hand, believe in a literal interpretation of the prophecies. They assert that there is not a single prophecy of which the fulfilment is recorded in Scripture that was not realised with absolute accuracy in every detail, and therefore that it is wholly unjustifiable to assume that a new system of fulfilment was inaugurated with the close of the sacred canon. Two thousand years ago, who would have believed that the prophecies concerning the Messiah would receive a literal fulfilment? "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (Isa. vii. 14). "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding on an ass, and on a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. ix. 9). "They weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver" (Zech. xi. 12, 13). "And they took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (Psa. xxii. 18). "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture" (Psa. xxii. 16). As Peter says, the meaning of these words was a mystery to the prophets themselves. Ordinary men doubtless regarded them as belonging to the realms of poetry or legend. And yet each of these prophecies received an absolutely literal fulfilment.

To this the Historical replies that there are two kinds of prophecy: (1) literal prophecy, when there is no need for concealment; and (2) symbolical prophecy, when there is a need for concealment. And undoubtedly there was an excellent motive for concealment in regard to the prophecies concerning the date of the second coming of Christ.

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The Historical school also claims that its interpretation is the more reasonable. There can be no doubt, for instance, as to which is the more likely interpretation, so far as the ordinary man is concerned, of the two following. At the sounding of the second trumpet John "saw as it were a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea : and the third part of the sea became blood ; and there died the third part of the creatures that were in the sea, even they that had life ; and the third part of the ships were destroyed " (Rev. viii. 8, 9). The Historical school interprets this as a prediction of a maritime invasion by a fierce power, accompanied by burning, bloodshed, death, and the destruction of shipping. The following, on the other hand, is a Futurist literal interpretation : " a great mountainous mass of matter falling from the sky, clothed in seething, thundering and flashing flames and dashing into the ocean, which it turns into blood " (" The Revelation," by Dr. Seiss).

It has also been objected that by assigning a figurative sense to apocalyptical prophecy the Historical expositors do but little honour to God's Word. To this they have a ready answer. Did Jesus commend His disciples for honouring His Word when they interpreted literally His admonition to " beware of the leaven of the Pharisees " ? Would they have honoured His Word more if, accepting literally the promised reward of faith, they had attempted the feat of transporting the Mount of Olives through the air into the Mediterranean Sea ?

The Historical point of view is essentially Protestant and has been consistently and often bitterly anti-papal. It arose in the eleventh century with the first protests against the growing corruptions of the Church of Rome. Among the Waldenses, the Wickliffites, and the Hussites it developed into a consistent system and was taken up with enthusiasm by the

Reformers. In their hands it became a powerful weapon. It broke the papal power and has remained one of the chief obstacles against reunion between Rome and the Protestant Churches.

The Futurist theory may be said to have originated among the early fathers, but its real significance dates from the time when it was taken up by Rome as a means of answering the deductions of Historical expositors. At one time it was held by none outside the Roman Church, but latterly it has been adopted by many students who do not owe allegiance to the Pope. It is held chiefly by men of extreme views, those who are in sympathy with Rome on the one hand, and by those who do not consider that the Reformation went far enough on the other.

As has been mentioned above in dealing with the Preterist school of interpretation, it is possible for a prophecy to have two fulfilments. Is it not also possible, therefore, that both the Historical and Futurist schools, in spite of their seeming opposition, may be more or less correct in their deductions? Powerful arguments have been advanced in favour of both, and powerful objections against them. Each can boast many eminent and earnest followers. Undoubtedly there is much that can be said in favour of either system. The inquirer who reads the works of Dr. Grattan Guinness will, more likely than not, be convinced that the Historical view is correct. Were he to read Sir Robert Anderson's "Coming Prince" he would be equally convinced that the Futurist view is the right one. This, indeed, has often happened. Is it not a hint that there is truth in both? This is not to say that all prophecies have dual fulfilments, but that it is possible that a great number may be fulfilled both figuratively and literally, in the past and in the future, both fulfilments being covered by the same language.

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Indeed, there are certain prophecies that may be said to refer not merely to two, but to three events. Take, for example, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6: "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." In its fullest sense this refers, as is shown by the close of the chapter, to the second coming of Christ. Nevertheless it certainly received a partial fulfilment at Christ's first coming. That it actually referred to the first coming as well as to the second is proved by Christ's reply to John the Baptist (Matt. xi. 3-5). And in addition to these two literal fulfilments it has also received a spiritual fulfilment in the effects of the Gospel on the spiritually blind and deaf. This is implied by Luke xiv. 21.

It is well, therefore, to study both the spirit and the letter of prophecy. The inquirer who is likely to glean most truth in the course of his investigations is not he who blindly follows any one school of interpretation, but he who preserves an open mind and remembers that some prophecies may have a spiritual fulfilment, some a literal, and some both a spiritual and a literal fulfilment.

CHAPTER II

ARE WE AT THE END OF THE DISPENSATION ?

It is a well-known scientific fact that everything in nature proceeds according to a well-defined law of periodicity. As might be expected, an orderly and consistent system of chronology is also a feature of the Scriptures, which are a revelation of the God of nature. That system is, from first to last, a system of weeks; septiform periodicity is stamped upon the Bible as conspicuously as upon nature.

The whole chronology of the Scriptures is regulated by the law of weeks. The times of creation, the times of the Pentateuch, the times of Moses, of the Kings and the prophets, are all subject to the system of weeks. The chronology of the Levitical law was based upon the system of weeks. The prophecies of both the Old and the New Testaments also bear its stamp. Prophecy being history written beforehand, its views are wider and more comprehensive than can be found elsewhere. Consequently in prophetic chronology we find periods of vaster scope, and, in its system of weeks, a key to the whole plan of history.

The Hebrew word translated as "week" means seven, and may designate any period composed of seven shorter periods, whether days, weeks, years, decades, centuries, or any other unit of time. Thus, the following "weeks" were appointed by the Jewish ritual for perpetual observance :

1. The week of days.
2. The week of weeks.

3. The week of months.
4. The week of years.
5. The week of weeks of years.

The week of days was appointed for various ceremonial observances. The consecration for the priesthood occupied seven days. And throughout the Books of Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus there are innumerable references to ceremonies of which the week of days was an integral part. The week of weeks, or forty-nine days, was the period appointed to elapse between the great annual gatherings of the Passover and Pentecost. The entire circle of the feasts of the Lord were comprised within a week of months. The week of years is referred to in Exod. xxi. 2, where it is ordained that a Hebrew servant should serve six years and on the seventh go free. The longest week ordained by the Mosaic ritual was the week of weeks of years, or forty-nine years. "Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound" (Lev. xxv. 8-13).

Another week pervades the whole of the Old Testament and embraces both Jews and Gentiles. That week is the week of decades. "The days of our lives are three score years and ten" (Psa. xv. 10). This week also marked the duration of the Babylonian captivity, and is constantly referred to by Jeremiah. And, as will be shown later, Daniel speaks of two more weeks; the week of weeks of decades and the week of years of years.

There is, therefore, a marvellous consistency and grandeur about the chronology of the Bible. This could not have come about by chance. It is not a mere coincidence that the law of weeks, or septiform periodicity, is so universal. It is an ordinance of God Himself and an ordinance with a purpose.

From the earliest days, statements of time have been an important element in Divine predictions. The hundred and twenty years that should elapse before the flood, the four hundred years' affliction of Abraham's seed, the forty years in the wilderness, the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, all these and many other periods were announced beforehand. Similarly, in the New Testament, Jesus said that He would rise again in three days. These and other predictions given to reveal the future are accompanied by plain literal statements of time. But there is also another series of predictions, in which a double object can be traced : the revealing and concealing of the future.

The revelations granted to Daniel and John, relating to the events of this dispensation, are not couched in ordinary language. They are not made in plain terms which admit of no second meaning. They are embodied in symbolical forms, which must be translated before they can be understood.

The times and periods which must be translated if we are to interpret these revelations are :

In Daniel :

1. That of the domination of the little horn (Dan. vii. 24) ;
2. That of the desolation of the sanctuary (Dan. viii. 8) ;
3. The interval between the restoration from Babylon and Messiah the Prince (Dan. ix. 24) ;
4. Time, times and a half (Dan. xii. 5, 9) ;
5. A period of 1,290 days (Dan. xii. 11) ;
6. A period of 1,335 days (Dan. xii. 12).

In the Apocalypse :

1. The ten days' tribulation of the Church at Smyrna (Rev. ii. 10) ;

2. The duration of the scorpion torment (Rev. ix. 5);
3. The career of the Euphratean horsemen (Rev. ix. 15);
4. The time of the downtreading of the Holy City (Rev. xi. 2);
5. That of the prophesying of the two witnesses (Rev. xi. 3);
6. The time the witnesses lay unburied (Rev. xi. 9);
7. The sojourn of the woman in the wilderness (Rev. xii. 6, 14);
8. The period of the domination of the beast (Rev. xiii. 6).

These prophecies give a complete history of the dispensation in symbolical language, and it seems obvious that all the periods of time mentioned in them are symbols of another and a larger period. For consider the case of a geographer wishing to represent the whole surface of the earth on a sheet of paper. He must of necessity employ a scale, and if the result is to be correct and trustworthy that scale must be applied consistently. God, in these prophecies, is mapping human history in order that he who reads may run. Obviously, then, the symbols which correspond to the geographer's scale must be employed with no less consistency.

The periods mentioned in the prophecies are described under the five main divisions of time: "hours," "days," "weeks," "months," and "years." There is mention of $3\frac{1}{2}$ days, 10 days, 1,260 days, and 1,335 days; of a half week, a week, 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 70 weeks; of 5 months, and 42 months; of a "day, month, and year," and "time, times and a half." To be intelligible all these measures must be interpreted on one scale.

Turn again to the geographer. To ascertain the scale on which his map is drawn, you choose two points, the actual distance between which you know, and measure the distance on the map in inches. Simple arithmetic will then reveal the scale.

It is the same with the prophecies. One of the periods has been fulfilled and therefore provides the key to all the rest. The seventy weeks of Dan. ix. elapsed between the decree of Artaxerxes and the advent of Christ. That period was actually 490 years. The prophet announced it as 490 days or 70 weeks. Therefore, a year is represented by a day.

The correctness of this year-day theory is attested by both the Old and New Testaments. In two passages God Himself adopts the scale. The first is in the sentence on Israel in the desert: "after the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years." Again, in Ezek. iv. 4, where the prophet is commanded to enact a type and to become the emblem of Israel by lying first on his left side for 390 days and then on his right side for forty days, God said: "I have appointed thee a day for a year."

In the New Testament Christ uses the same symbolic phraseology, and for the same reason that it is employed in prophecy, to reveal while concealing and to conceal while revealing the future. When told that Herod intended to kill Him He said: "Go ye and tell the fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must work to-day and to-morrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." Twice He mentions a definite period of three days. But a much longer period than three literal days elapsed between the utterance of the words and

the death and resurrection of Christ. As a matter of fact, it is generally believed that the ministry of Christ lasted three years ; from the first passover when He cleansed the temple and began His public ministry to the fourth passover when He ate with His disciples the night before He suffered.

Indeed, in the whole field of prophetic interpretation there are few theories resting on a more solid basis than the year-day system.

Scripture presents us with three distinct dispensations prior to the "Times of the restitution of all things," or Millennial Age. These dispensations are (1) The Patriarchal Age, (2) The Jewish Dispensation, and (3) The Times of the Gentiles. This last dispensation being the one in which we are living, it is naturally the one in which we are most interested. The other dispensations have long since passed into history, but we have still to look forward to the close of the Times of the Gentiles and the great events which will mark the end of the age.

It must be kept in mind that these dispensations are not sharply juxtaposed so that we may take a chart of time and mark off the beginning and the end of each with a straight line. Each dispensation grew out of the preceding, so that the beginning and end overlap and merge one into the other.

For instance, the Jewish dispensation began to end and the present dispensation to arise in the fall of the Israelites before the Assyrians. Other stages in the waning of the old and the waxing of the new were marked by the Babylonian wars culminating in the fall of Jerusalem. But it was not until many years after that event, when Adrian finally made Palestine a desolation and completed the work of dispersing the Jews over the face of the earth, that the Jewish Age can be said to have come completely to an end.

When the Egyptian captivity was announced to

Abraham chronological limits were assigned to it ; similarly the Babylonian captivity was foretold by Isaiah, seventy years being fixed as its duration. It might be expected, therefore, that the length of the Jewish affliction and degradation, the Times of the Gentiles, would also be foretold in the Scriptures. As, however, those times include those of the Christian Church and of the waiting for the second advent of Christ, which, as has already been pointed out, was veiled by God in mystery, it is not to be expected that the prediction will be found in any plain terms.

When this long period of Jewish desolation and chastisement was first threatened (Lev. xxvi.) the expression "seven times" was emphatically used in connection with it. "If ye will not yet for all this hearken unto Me, then I will punish you *seven times* for your sins . . . and if ye will not be reformed by Me in these things, but will walk contrary unto Me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet *seven times* for your sins. . . . And if ye will not hearken unto Me . . . then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury, and I, even I, will chastise you *seven times* for your sins . . . I will make your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation . . . and I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you . . . and ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up."

The first *seven times* spoken of by Moses refers to the duration of the Babylonian captivity—seventy years. The second reference is to the period between the restoration of Jerusalem and the birth of Christ, or 490 years. May we not, then, infer that the last seven times, the period of the greatest desolation, refers to a great week, seven years whose days are years, or 2,520 natural years ?

This assumption fits in remarkably well with the

facts, so far as they are known. Although the four-fold image symbolising to Nebuchadnezzar the succession of the Gentile empires which were to fill up the long interval of Jewish rejection had no chronology attached to it, nevertheless we know that those empires, generally taken as the Assyrian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Pagan and Papal Roman powers, have, as a matter of history, lasted for about 2,520 years.

Moreover a subsequent vision granted to Nebuchadnezzar can be interpreted as a revelation of the time which was to elapse between the rise of the Gentile empires and the establishment of the Kingdom of God which is to follow them. The Assyrian king saw a tree cut down and its stump left to be wet by the dew of heaven, and its portion with the beasts in the grass of the earth, its heart changed from a man's heart into that of a beast, until seven times should pass over it. This vision was, as Daniel told the king, a prophecy of the seven years' insanity which, as a chastening for his pride, was to overtake him that he might learn to know God and to own that the heavens rule. All that Daniel predicted actually came to pass.

But the vision of the tree is no more clearly symbolic of that incident in the life of Nebuchadnezzar than the incident itself is typical of certain features of the succession of Gentile monarchies, of which Nebuchadnezzar was both the head and representative. Hence there is reason to assume that the seven times of the vision refers not only to the duration of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity, but also to the duration of the domination of the Gentiles.

If, then, the Times of the Gentiles are to be fulfilled in 2,520 years, we have now to ascertain when that period took its rise.

Again the answer is to be found in Daniel. The

whole course of Gentile supremacy is symbolised by an image whose head was its beginning and ten toes its end. Interpreting the dream, the prophet said, "Thou art the head of gold." But Daniel did not address the Assyrian king as an individual. He referred to him as the representative of an empire. This is clear, for immediately afterwards he says, "and after thee shall arise another kingdom, inferior to thee," meaning the Medo-Persian Empire. That empire did not rise after Nebuchadnezzar, but after the fall of the Babylonian Empire.

It seems clear, therefore, that one starting-point of the Times of the Gentiles is the date of the rise of the Babylonian Empire; in other words, 747 B.C., the date of the accession of Nabonassar, the first king of Babylon. Another starting-point is obviously the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Like other great national changes, the subjugation of the twelve tribes of Israel to the Assyrian and Babylonian powers was only gradually accomplished. First Ephraim fell, then Judah. The latter's fall was at first only partial, and it became a tributary kingdom. But afterwards its downfall was complete, and its people passed into bondage and captivity.

The leading stages of the decline and fall of the Jewish monarchy were :

1. The invasion of Pul . . . 770 B.C.
2. The siege and fall of Samaria . 723 B.C.
3. The captivity of Manasseh . . 676 B.C.
4. Final fall of the throne of Judah 602-598 B.C.

The period between 770 B.C. and 598 B.C. may therefore be taken as the time of the end of the Jewish dispensation. If, then, "seven times" be the appointed duration of this the succeeding dispensation, as we have reason to believe, we may expect to find 2,520 years after the era of the Jewish captivity a

corresponding time of the end, a period of similar decline and fall on the part of the Gentile ruling power, and ushering in the end of the dispensation. Like the other, this decline and fall will take place under the judgment of God for long-continued sin. Just as the patriarchal times died out amid the plagues of Egypt and the Jewish in the sack of Jerusalem, so the Gentile times will come to an end, as the Apocalypse reveals, in the outpouring of the seven golden vials full of the wrath of God.

Bearing in mind that in passing from B.C. to A.D. it is necessary to add one year, simple arithmetic shows us that 2,520 years from the period 770–598 B.C., the expected time of the end of the Times of the Gentiles, is 1751–1923 A.D. Has that period, so far as we know it, any of the characteristics which we might expect to find in the closing years of the Gentile dispensation ?

The Gentile powers among whom we must seek for the answer to this question are those symbolised in the two fourfold visions of Daniel, the image and the four beasts. Those powers are, as is generally agreed, Babylon, the Medo-Persian, the Greek, and the Roman empires. Three of these have passed away. Hence our search is confined to the fourth. This was foretold as existing in two states—an earlier undivided and a later divided. The former of these states has passed away. Therefore, our search is still further restricted to the last stage of the last of the powers; in other words, to the two “little horns,” the Papal and Mohammedan powers.

Ever since the time of Clovis, France ranked as the first of the Papal nations and her king as the Eldest Son of the Church. For more than a thousand years France was the main support of Papal power in Europe. And yet about the year 1750 A.D., the beginning of the expected time of the end, a change

came over France. The people who extirpated Protestantism in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew and, by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, drove the surviving Huguenots into exile, listened eagerly to the doctrines of Voltaire, the high-priest of infidelity. Before the century was out, matters culminated in the Revolution, which substituted a strumpet in Notre Dame for the religion of the Pope. The Papacy has never regained its power in France, which to-day is a country without a religion. And since that time Papal power has steadily declined all over Europe. Finally on September 20th, 1870, the Papacy lost its last shred of temporal power and Rome was declared to be the capital of the Kingdom of Italy.

The years that have elapsed since the middle of the eighteenth century have been as fatal for the Eastern horn as for the Western. The drying up of the Euphratean flood, as the end of Mohammedan power is referred to in the Apocalypse, began with the Russo-Turkish War in 1770. In this the Turks, once the terror of Europe, were thoroughly beaten and forced to cede territory. The process thus begun has continued ever since. In 1828 Greece obtained her independence, and in the following year Serbia threw off the Turkish yoke. In 1844 the Sultan was forced to issue his famous edict of religious toleration. For years the Sultan has been the sick man of Europe. The recent Balkan War reduced his territories still more, and now that Turkey has joined her lot with that of the Kaiser, who does not believe that we are within sight of the end of Mohammedan power in Europe, at least ?

Assuming, therefore, that the Historical interpretation of the two little horns as Papal and Mohammedan power are correct, we have striking evidence that the year-day theory is correct and also that we are now in the final stages of the present dispensation.

A mass of further evidence, equally conclusive, has been brought forward by Dr. Grattan Guinness in his volume "The Approaching End of the Age," in which the whole subject of the chronology of the prophecies is most exhaustively treated from the Historical point of view. But enough has been said above to indicate that we are in all probability very near to the end of the Times of the Gentiles.

Although the making of definite predictions on the basis of interpretation of the prophecies is to be deprecated as a dangerous hobby likely to bring derision on the study of God's Word, nevertheless the predictions of Robert Fleming are worthy of notice, especially by those interested in the year-day principle.

It was in 1701 that Fleming wrote his "Apocalyptic Key," and in this work he made four remarkable predictions :

1. That in 1793 the French dynasty, at that time the terror of Europe, would be overthrown ;
2. That in 1848, or thereabouts, the Papal power would receive a severe check ;
3. That about the year 1900 the Turkish power in Europe would be destroyed ; and
4. That about the year 2000 the Millennium would begin after being preceded by Armageddon.

Little notice of these predictions was taken at the time of their utterance. But when in 1793 the first was startlingly fulfilled by the beheading of Louis XVI the book was republished and widely read. The second prediction was also fulfilled, for it was in 1848 that Pope Pius IX was forced to fly to Gaeta and the temporal power of Rome was broken. In view of present events the third and fourth predictions need

no comment. It is at least probable that soon the Turk will be definitely ejected from Europe ; and there are those who hold that the war now raging marks at least the beginning of the wars which will culminate in Armageddon.

Fleming deducted his dates from calculations based upon the numbers given in the Book of Revelation.

He begins by the following assumptions :

1. That " The Revelation contains the series of all the remarkable events and changes of the state of the Christian Church to the end of the world.

" 2. That Mystical Babylon or the great whore, described there, doth signify Rome in an Antichristian Church state.

" 3. That therefore this cannot be Rome Pagan properly but Rome Papal.

" 4. That the Seven Heads of the Beast, or the Seven Kings, are the seven forms of government which obtained successively among the Romans, and seeing the *Sixth* of these was that which was in being in St. John's time (the former *Five* having fallen before) that therefore consequently the Seventh Head (.) is the last species of government, and that which is called most peculiarly and by a speciality The Beast or Antichrist."

He proceeds : " I must in the next place premise two preliminary considerations

" The first is this : That the three grand apocalyptic numbers of ' 1260 days,' ' 42 months,' and ' time times and half a time,' are not only synchronical but must be interpreted prophetically so as ' years ' must be understood by ' days.'

" The second preliminary consideration is that in order to understand the *prophetical* years aright we must reduce them to *Julian* years. . . .

" For the Julian (and Gregorian) months con-

sisting some of 30 and some of 31 days (excepting February) and the years consequently of 365 days, there must be some considerable difference from the prophetical year of 360 days in the revolution of many centuries.

“Therefore, considering only the 5 days added to our 360 in ordinary years we find that the 1260 days in the Revelation, being reduced to years, are 18 years short of Julian years in the prophetical reckoning, by reason of the additional days turned into years in the ordinary accounts now above the Apocalyptical reckoning.

“To apply this therefore to our design. If we may suppose that Antichrist began his reign in the year 606 the additional 1260 years of his duration, were they Julian or ordinary years, would lead us down to the year 1866 as the last period of the seven-headed monster. But seeing they are prophetical years only, we must cut away 18 years in order to bring them to the exact measure of time that the Spirit of God designs in this book. And thus the final period of Papal usurpation (supposing that he did indeed rise in the year 606) must conclude with the year 1848.”

Fleming argues for the year 606 thus :

“It is plain from Rev. xvii. 10, that the Imperial government was the regent head of the Roman Beast at the time of the vision. The Seventh Head, or King of Rome, who was to succeed to the Imperial Government and to continue but a short space, could be no other than the Kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy.

“For the Imperial dignity was extinguished in Italy and the Western Empire when Augustulus was forced to abdicate in 475 or 476 by Odoacer. From Odoacer to Teias the government of the Ostrogoths continued, a period of about 80 years—a short time

if compared either with the Imperial Government past or the Papal to come."

It follows that the Papal Government was not dominant until the destruction of this Kingdom of the Goths, for there could not be two supreme heads of Rome at the same time. The Papal power could not rise to its full extent immediately on the overthrow of the Ostrogoths because Justinian by conquering Italy revived the Imperial Government ; though his conquests paved the way by laws against all who dissented from the Romish Church, and by the confusion which followed the bringing in of the Lombards by Narses. " For during the struggles of them and the Exarchat, the Pope so played his game that the Emperor Phocas found it his interest to engage him to his party by giving him the title of ' Supreme and Universal Bishop.'

" Therefore we may justly reckon that the Papal Head took its first rise from the remarkable year 606 when Phocas did in a manner devolve the Government of the West upon him by giving him the title of '*Universal Bishop.*' If a bare title of this sort be not thought sufficient to constitute the Pope Head of the Beast we may reckon it two years later when Boniface the 4th did first publicly authorise Idolatry by dedicating the Pantheon to the worship of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

" I do not reckon the *full rise* of the Pope to the headship of the Empire till a later date still. For . . . I cannot reckon him to have been Head of Rome till he was so in a secular as well as ecclesiastical sense, which was not till the days of King Pepin. So that as Boniface the Third, by assuming the title of Universal Bishop, was the forerunner of Antichrist (as Gregory the Great prophesied he would be who should be known in the world by that proud title), so we may conclude that Antichrist was indeed come

when Pope Paul the First became a temporal prince also. Phocas therefore did only proclaim the Pope to be the last *head of Rome* in the apocalyptical sense : Pepin gave him the solemn investiture. Now, as near as I can trace this, it was about 758 A.D., which with 1260 (minus 18) prophetical years makes 2000 exactly." "If," adds Fleming, "Antichrist shall not be destroyed till the coming of Christ this calculation is of interest."

CHAPTER III

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

THE truth of the statement that we are now fast approaching, if indeed we have not already reached, the eleventh hour of the dispensation can be judged by an inquiry into the signs of the times. Christ Himself told us what those signs would be, and added : " When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh " (Luke xxi. 28).

Some people are, or rather were, extremely optimistic concerning the state of the world. They rejoiced with the poet Browning :

" God's in His Heaven,
All's right with the world."

They looked round and saw the progress that has been made in such matters as the protection of women and children, the care of the sick, the prevention and diminution of disease, the advance of education, and the growth of justice and liberty. And forthwith they jumped to the conclusion that the theories of the evolutionists were correct, that mankind and everything else in the universe was a sort of lifeless clockwork contraption which steadily ticked off progress instead of time. We were, they informed us, growing better and better ; soon we should reach the glorious man-made millennium towards which everything was steadily marching, an era when everything would be scientific and dull,

when everything would be regulated by the perfect by-laws of a perfect bumbledom, and, let us add, when none of us would have anything so unscientific as a soul. Even so-called ministers of God, who evidently had never even glanced at the prophecies which comprise a third of the Book which they professed to hold sacred, were to be found arguing on these lines.

They have received a rude awakening from their trumpery dreams. At the beginning of August 1914 they awoke. The storm clouds of war burst over mankind, and the crimson flood swept away the vain fancies that had been idly woven in the days of peace. Dreams gave place to reality, and the dreamers were shown, if they cared to use their eyes, that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the world is still under the domination of the Evil One. Where are those who but a short time ago were seeking to amend God's Word in order to make it fit in with modern "facts and progress"? Dare they lift up their heads and show themselves?

They were blind to the signs of the times. Lord Shaftesbury, than whom there was a no more indefatigable worker on behalf of the suffering, said: "I have been identified with a great number of humanising influences and activities during the past half-century. I have seen humanity improved and the classes drawn together. But the more I see them being improved in that way, the farther they are getting away from God."

Those who have studied the Scriptures know that there is no justification to be found there for the assumption that there will be a steady decline in war and human misery. On the other hand, they know that the second coming of Christ will be heralded with an increase of wars, pestilence, and earthquakes. Nevertheless, many who have called

themselves Christians and have denounced the German militarist writers with pious horror as antichristian, have themselves denied the Scriptures by asserting that war between the great powers of the earth was now impossible, or at least improbable. The primary requirement of a Christian is that he shall believe the Word of God, and from that we know that wars such as the present are to be expected as heralding the end.

One great sign of the times is, then, being amply fulfilled at the present time. There has indeed been a great increase in war. This war is the greatest conflict in human history. It is a war of wars, not merely between nation and nation, but between nations and nations. It has spread itself all over the earth; in every quarter of the globe it is being waged. No, for all his superficial progress, man is not yet complete, nor within measurable distance of being perfect. He is still the son of Adam who brought sin and suffering into the world; he cannot evade the full measure of God's purpose.

Moreover, this present war, overwhelming as it is in its magnitude, is by no means a new thing. The sign of the increase of war has been in course of fulfilment for many years past. The Balkan, the Turko-Italian, the Russo-Japanese, the Boer, the Spanish-American, and many minor wars have all happened in the course of this generation. The whole period of the last two generations has been marked by a tremendous increase in war, both directly and indirectly. Consider the fevered race for armaments during the past few years, the untold millions that have been spent and the untold labour that has been expended upon the profitless preparation for the present conflict. Consider the frenzied activities of science in its hideous work of providing men with more terrible weapons with which they may slaughter their

fellow-men. Are not these signs of a great increase in war? And yet there were many who were so blind to the truth, so deaf to the Word of God, and so bemused with their vain imaginings that they could not discern them until the full force of the storm burst upon them.

It was suggested by those who wished to retain faith in the Bible, and yet could not bring themselves to believe that the peoples who were blessed with the marvels of modern science and culture could so far sink into savagery as to cut one another's throats, that the signs of the end of the dispensation were not to be interpreted literally, but more or less symbolically. Thus the increase in war was to be taken as referring to the increase in trade rivalry and other modern struggles; in short, that the end will not be anything like such an awe-inspiring affair as a literal interpretation of the prophecies of Revelation would lead us to expect. Admitting that there is some basis for this symbolical interpretation in that the prophecies have been receiving a partial fulfilment in the increase of commercial rivalry, it is none the less quite plain from the present state of affairs that we must also look for a more complete fulfilment.

Those who advanced the theory fell into the pitfall against which all who seek to interpret the prophecies symbolically must carefully guard themselves. That pitfall is the habit, common enough in modern times, of regarding God as subject to the theories of the evolutionists. Many people talk and write as if there were half a dozen Gods in the Bible, ranging from the ferocious tribal deity of a savage race to a benign philanthropic individual who is chiefly concerned with the better housing of the poor and the provision of shirts for savages. They think that because we have discovered the utility of drain-pipes and have managed to obtain a veneer of knowledge and good manners, that the God of Moses has also advanced

and become a sort of glorified modern parent, so soft and indulgent that He would not visit any really nasty punishments upon His spoilt children. Nothing could be farther from the truth. God is and must be God the Eternal and Changeless. The God of Adam, the God of Moses, and the God of Abraham is still God. He has not changed one jot or tittle. He is the same God who, because of the disobedience of His chosen people, visited upon them the afflictions and desolations of the captivities and the fall of Jerusalem, even as He predicted through the words of His prophets. Those predictions were fulfilled utterly and inexorably. Will He not therefore fulfil every one of the prophecies that have been made concerning the end of the present age, the greatest retribution of all and the last work prior to the great Sabbath of the Lord ?

Another sign of the times is given in John v. 43, "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." There will thus be a flood of false religions and doctrines towards the end of the dispensation.

Such religions and doctrines have been spreading over Europe and America at an alarming rate during the last few years, just as agnosticism and open atheism have been spreading over the Continent. These latter pernicious doctrines have reached their zenith in Russia, where school-children have formed free-love societies and suicide of the young has become a national evil.

In England and America we see such travesties of Christianity as "Millennial Dawnism," which denies the divinity of Christ and His resurrection from the grave, and "Christian Science" flourishing in our midst. Mormonism is attracting adherents from all parts of Europe. Buddhism is making progress, and some time ago the Sultan of Turkey gave a donation of £1,000 to a fund for building a Mohammedan

mosque in London. Another flourishing cult is Theosophy, and there are many more. There is Bahaism and Vaishnavism, the central figure of which is the god Gauranga. These have attracted seemingly sane people and can boast not a few followers.

With the rise of infidelity and these false religions there has been a falling away among the accepted Christian Churches. In the Church of England congregations have been steadily declining during the past half-century. This growing lack of interest in religion has also been brought home to the various Nonconformist Churches. In three years the Baptists lost 12,000 members ; in one year the Congregationalists lost 4,000 ; while the Methodists lost 10,000 in three years. That the world is growing less devoted to the religion of Christ is also proved by the decline in the numbers of candidates for the ministry. The average rate of this decline in the Church of England is 200 a year. The missionary societies have also found that fewer men are volunteering for service in the foreign field than formerly.

Within the Churches themselves we see the same signs of half-hearted faith. The Broad Church clergy, many High Churchmen, and a number of Evangelical ministers have accepted the deductions of the Higher Critics with far more alacrity than they accepted the words of Christ Himself. Everywhere there is evidence of that spirit of spurious liberalism which is prepared to sacrifice all for the sake of peace and quietness. The modern spirit is to carry tolerance to the point of weakness, and there is hardly a principle that is upheld to-day with the uncompromising and valiant faith which made our forefathers great.

In view of all these things can there be any doubt that the world is rapidly preparing itself to welcome the Antichrist and, therefore, that the end of the dispensation is at hand ?

CHAPTER IV

THE IMAGE AND THE END OF THE DISPENSATION

It has been shown in the second chapter how from the study of the chronology of the prophecies contained in the Book of Daniel it is possible to adduce evidence that the end of the Times of the Gentiles is fast approaching. By another process of reasoning we may come to the same conclusion from a consideration of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the Great Image described in the second chapter of Daniel.

The image was composed of various substances. The head was of gold, the breast, shoulders, and arms were of silver, the belly of brass, and the legs of iron. But the feet were partly iron and partly clay.

The four metals represent the four great powers of the Times of the Gentiles—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. "Thou art the head of gold," says the prophet to Nebuchadnezzar. "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon, and on the night of his death "Darius the Median took the kingdom" (Dan. v. 31). In chapter vii. this power, that represented by the silver, is broken by the goat from the west. "And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece." This was Alexander the Great, the power of brass. The iron power is Rome, but its identity was not revealed in the Old Testament because it did not arise until after the canon was complete. But it is plain from the New Testa-

ment that Rome was the fourth power to oppress Israel.

It will be noticed that there is a gradual descent in the character of the metals of which the image was composed. The order of their value is also the order of their appearance in the vision. This point was emphasised by the prophet when he remarked that the Medo-Persian Empire would be inferior to the Babylonian. It will also be noticed that the metals are in the ascending order of their hardness and durability. Gold is the softest, then comes silver, then brass, and finally iron, which is the strongest and most enduring of the metals mentioned.

This image is the symbol of the whole duration of the Times of the Gentiles, that is, from the Babylonian captivity down to the second coming of Christ. There remains the stone which, in the vision, smites the image on the feet. Some have interpreted this stone as signifying the Gospel, but there are objections to that interpretation. In verse 35 we are told that "the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." A mountain is a common symbol in Scripture for a kingdom, and the kingdom into which the stone developed was that of Christ, which is usually referred to as the Millennium, or the Kingdom of Christ.

There is ample evidence in favour of this interpretation to be found in the Bible. "The stone which the builders rejected is become the Head Stone of the corner" (Psa. cxviii. 22). "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth" (Zech. xiv. 9). "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Dan. vii. 27).

As the metals declined in quality so have the empires. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute autocrat, the greatest, perhaps, that the world has known.

“ Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive ; and whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. And all people, all nations and languages, trembled and feared before him ” (Dan. v. 19). Such words can be said of no other monarch known to history. Such absolute human government can only be likened to the government of God, which is absolute in the fullest sense of the word. That is the form of government which that of Christ will take when He reigns King over all the earth. Only, Christ is Divine and All-wise, whereas Nebuchadnezzar was but an imperfect man.

The Medo-Persian kings never attained such a degree of absolutism. Power had begun to pass from the hands of the ruler to those of the people. And the process thus started has continued ever since. The history of the Times of the Gentiles is the story of the fall of Autocracy and the rise of Democracy.

Here we have a clue to the significance of the clay in the feet of the image. That clay represented the modern form of government—that of Democracy.

The head of gold was Babylon and, as has been shown above, began about the year 606 B.C. It ended about the year 538 B.C., on the night of the feast of Belshazzar. The length of the head of the image is thus about 68 years. The Medo-Persian Empire arose in 538 B.C. and continued until about 331 B.C. We thus have 207 years as the length of the breast and arms. Greece, the third world-power, lasted from 331 B.C. until 168 B.C. when it was conquered by the Romans. The length of the belly is therefore 163 years. The fourth power, represented by the legs of iron, has continued in its two forms of Pagan Rome and Papal Rome ever since. The domination of Democracy, represented in the image

as the feet of clay, may be said to have begun with the French Revolution about the year A.D. 1795. Hence the length of the legs may be taken as the period between 168 B.C. and A.D. 1795, or 1,963 years.

From 1795 to the present year of 1915 is 120 years. If we take this to be the length of the feet, we have in the various lengths of the head, the breast and shoulders, the body, the legs and the feet of the image a remarkably striking relation to the average figure of a man.

May we not assume that this wonderful relation between the lengths of the parts of the image and the lengths of the same parts of the average man will continue until the end ? If so, we have further proof that we must be very near to the end. The head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and sides of brass, and the legs of iron have all come and gone. We are now living in the period represented by the clay portion of the feet, and exceedingly near to the toes.

What do those toes represent ? Obviously a confederation of nations. And there are abundant signs to-day that such a confederation is in process of formation. On the one hand we have Germany, Austria, and Turkey banded together. But, remembering that the downfall of Turkey has been foretold in the drying up of the Euphratean flood, we cannot expect that these nations will form the nucleus of the confederation. But Britain, France, Russia, Belgium, Serbia, and Japan are already in alliance against a common foe. At the moment of writing there is every prospect of their being joined by Rumania and Italy and possibly Greece. Spain and Holland are mobilised and prepared for any eventuality. And will the United States be able to avoid being drawn into this world-wide strife ?

At the present moment there are six nations confederated. By the time that these lines appear in print the confederation may have been increased to eight or nine. Who can say how long it will be before the ten toes of the image will be complete ?

CHAPTER V

REVELATION AND THE PRESENT TIME

IN the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation it is related how the Lord sent seven epistles to the seven Churches in the province of Asia. In those letters were written the prophetic history of the Church, beginning at the end of the Apostolic period and ending with its final rejection. Laodicea, we are told, will be "spued out of the mouth of the Lord" because of her "lukewarmness."

In the fourth and fifth chapters the vision of John is translated from earth to heaven, and he sees the preparations there for fulfilling the great announcement of God that He is about to resume His rights as the Creator of all things. He sees the Lamb take the Book from the hand of Him who sits on the Throne and so assume the function of administering the will of the Father. This assumption of authority by Christ marks the rejection of the Churches.

In the seventh chapter John looks down on the earth. There is no sign of the Church or of Christian teaching. But he sees the ministers of judgment standing ready to strike, and they are commanded to stay their hand for a while. From the ninth verse onwards John is shown the result of the terrible period which he is about to witness in order that he, and, through him, we ourselves, may realise that God is merciful as well as just. Then in chapter viii. the storm breaks.

Chapter vi. may thus be taken as coming between these two events and covering the period between the rejection of the Church and the second coming of Christ.

From what has been said above it must be obvious that we are living in the period symbolised by the lukewarmness of Laodicea—in other words, that the Church is under the ban of rejection. If this be so, the events symbolised in the sixth chapter of Revelation are those of the present time. A consideration of those events, therefore, may give us some light as to the imminence of Christ's second coming and also as to the actual course of events now happening.

This intervening period is described as being taken up with the opening of six of the seven seals which close the seven sheets of the book.

The opening of the first seal reveals the rise of a military nation which achieves great conquests and as a result of its victories obtains an imperial crown.

The second seal reveals a military power seeking to obtain domination over the other powers and deluging the world with blood. The third and fourth seals predict that the ravages of this power throughout a fourth part of the earth result in famine and pestilence.

The fifth seal may be taken as describing the Rapture, and the sixth describes the earth as in a state of panic and apprehension.

There is a remarkable relation between the Kingdom of Prussia and the events thus symbolised in the prophecy. A hundred years ago Prussia was a petty state of no great account in the world. Then suddenly it forced its way into the forefront of the powers. It wrested Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, then it overcame the German Confederation and became the corner stone of the modern German Empire. In 1866 it crushed Austria and in 1870

humbled France to the dust. The King of Prussia was crowned Emperor of Germany in the Palace of Versailles and returned to Berlin the leader of what was on all sides acknowledged to be the strongest military power in Europe.

It is unnecessary to point out how fully these events comply with the prediction of the first seal.

From 1870 to 1914 the most noticeable fact in history was the growing arrogance of Prussia. Writers and preachers have been bombarding the ears of its people with the doctrine that they are the salt of the earth and that it is their right to dominate all the other nations of the world. These doctrines have taken root and flourished. The most careful preparations have been made for the great day when Prussia would step forward and demand its right to rule. Everything in the state has been subordinated to this great purpose. In August last Prussia threw down her challenge to the world. She has plunged the world into the greatest war of history, not to avenge a wrong or to gain territory, but simply to humble all the other powers and to obtain a world-wide domination.

This is the fulfilment of the second seal. The Kaiser has taken "peace from the earth" and gone forth armed with "a great sword." The manhood of Europe and most of the civilised world is either taking an active part in the conflict or is ready to take the place of the fallen. Millions are facing one another armed with the most efficient weapons of destruction that man has yet devised. Already Europe has been drenched with blood, and it is impossible to say when the crimson flood will be stayed. The nations of Europe are indeed fulfilling the prediction that "they shall kill one another" (Rev. vi. 4).

But the horrors of the present are as nothing compared with the horrors of the future. The third and

fourth seals show us that the war will be followed, as indeed might be expected from the ruthlessness with which it is being waged, by pestilence and famine, which will destroy many who escape from the times of the second seal. Moreover, as is indicated by Rev. vi. 8, there will be earthquakes and other elemental disturbances to add to the terrors of the time.

CHAPTER VI

ARE THE BRITISH THE LOST TRIBES ?

THERE is one sign of the times which cannot be said to have been fulfilled with anything like the same completeness as the others. That sign is the promised return of Israel to Palestine.

Of course, the Zionist Movement has been in existence for some years and a certain amount of progress has been made. It has been estimated that there are now about 100,000 Jews settled in the country, 50,000 of these being in or around Jerusalem. Old and decayed towns such as Safed and Hebron have now become centres of industry. Agricultural settlements have been formed and a certain amount of trade has returned to the ports.

But these things can hardly be regarded as constituting the return of a nation. At the most they can only be claimed to be indications that such a return as has been predicted will take place at some far-distant date. The scheme is still more or less in the hands of a few enthusiasts and cannot be said to have emerged from the visionary stage.

As has already been stated, we have very good reasons for believing that the other signs of the times have been fulfilled with far greater completeness, so completely indeed that we may with justification assume that the end of the dispensation is very near. We cannot think that God has forgotten to see to the fulfilment of this sign for which we were

definitely told to watch, neither can we believe it to be likely that the Jews all over the world will in the near future be filled with a sudden desire to abandon all their manifold interests in the countries of their adoption and to return to Palestine. We are therefore faced with a dilemma which cannot be ignored.

Now one of the most marvellous pieces of evidence we have that the Bible is indeed the Word of God is the remarkable way in which the prophecies concerning the history of the chosen people have been fulfilled, up to a certain point. Those prophecies may be summarised as follows: For her repeated disobedience in spite of many warnings Israel is to be ejected from the promised land and that land turned into a desolation; but God will restore His people to the land that He gave them immediately before He sends His Son a second time to the earth, on this occasion as the Ruler of the world.

Every one knows that the promised land was Palestine. From its present condition it may be doubted that it ever justified its description of a land flowing with milk and honey. But there is conclusive evidence that not only was Palestine a very fertile country in past ages, but also that it is to-day one of the most fertile tracts of land in the whole world. How could those mighty cities, the evidence of the existence and greatness of which does not rest on the Bible alone, have arisen and continued if the land were not fertile enough to provide food for their inhabitants? In those days every country and town was of necessity self-supporting. Trade was precarious and almost negligible. Palestine must have been remarkably fertile in the past to have supported the numerous population which we know lived within its borders.

As to the present fertility of the land we cannot do better than quote the opinions of a few acknowledged

authorities. "Galilee," says Malte Brun, "would be a Paradise were it inhabited by an industrious people under an enlightened government." Speaking of Judea, Dr. Clarke says: "Twelve inches beneath the surface is a splendid dark rich soil. The natural fertility of these immense plains cannot be over-estimated. But lying fallow from year to year and from age to age the soil has become exceedingly rich and only requires cultivation to become one of the most fruitful and verdant spots on the face of the earth."

Actual experience amply proves these opinions. On a small farm at Urtas, a village near Bethlehem, a rotation of five different crops is obtained in one year, and a peach stone which was planted grew peaches within the first twelve months.

And yet, to use the words of the Psalmist, they think scorn of that pleasant land.

Why does not the world, with all its agricultural science and need of food, take advantage of this marvellously fertile land with its unlimited resources? There is one answer, and one answer only, to that question—because God has ordained that Palestine shall be a desolation. There is no other way of explaining this neglect. Palestine is near Europe, it has many safe harbours from which its produce could be shipped to every country in the world. Its situation is unique, from its shores ships can proceed easily and quickly in all directions. Think of the millions which have been expended in our efforts to obtain a cheap food supply and ask yourself why has not the scientific development of Palestine's resources been financed. Again the only answer is, God has willed it so.

It should be remembered too that the promised land includes not only Palestine, but a portion of Egypt as well. The results which have attended the British

irrigation schemes in that country are further evidence of the fertility of that land.

There are hundreds of deserted towns and villages to be found throughout the land. In describing the conquest of the land Moses tells us that "we took all his cities at that time . . . three score cities, all in the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were found with high walls, gates and bars; beside unwallled towns a great many" (Deut. iii. 4, 5). Those cities are there to this day. There are the great walled cities with their ponderous gates of stone and the numerous unwallled towns. There are the fields which the inhabitants cultivated, the terraces they made, and the vineyards they planted. And the whole country is desolate, literally without man or beast. These cities contain some of the oldest specimens of ancient architecture to be found in the world and they are all in a marvellous state of preservation. It has been estimated that four hundred families might at a moment's notice settle in Salchah without the necessity of laying a stone or expending an hour's labour on repairs. But it was of this very country that it was prophesied that "the cities thereof shall be desolate without any to dwell therein" (Jer. xlviii. 9). And there they stand a witness to the Lord for all men to see.

As the first portion of the prophecies has been fulfilled with such utter and literal completeness, is it not certain that the latter portion will also be realised with similar fullness? And yet, as we have already seen, although we may reasonably come to the conclusion that the end of the dispensation is at hand, the return of the chosen people to the promised land is the only sign of the times which cannot be said to be fulfilled or to have any prospect of fulfilment in the near future.

As is well known to every reader of the Bible, the

ejection of the chosen people from the land which the Lord gave them took place in two stages. Ten tribes were taken into captivity by the Assyrians; the other two, Judah and Levi, fell before Babylon. A study of the history of these tribes and the references to them to be found in the Bible may therefore help us toward clearing up the mystery of the unfulfilled sign.

God called Abraham up out of the land of Ur of the Chaldeans to be His servant, and made an unconditional promise with regard to his seed. That covenant is recorded thus: "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time and said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and the sand which is upon the sea shore: and thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed My voice" (Gen. xxii. 15-18).

This covenant was repeated to Abraham's grandson Jacob when God called him Israel, which means Prince of God: "God said unto him, I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come out of thy loins" (Gen. xxxv. 11.)

Before his death Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. To Ephraim he gave the birthright although he was not the elder of the two. "He [Manasseh] shall become a people, and he also shall become great; but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations" (Gen. xlviii. 19). This birthright, of course, should properly have gone to Jacob's first-born Reuben, but it was taken from him because of his sin.

Jacob also gave a special blessing to Judah, his fourth son. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thine hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies, thy father's children shall bow down before thee" (Gen. xlix. 8). To Judah was given the emblem of the Lion and to Joseph's sons the emblem of the Unicorn.

After a time a distinction arose between the two nations of Judah and Israel. David was anointed king over Judah only, and Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was made king over Israel. This severance continued for seven years, when Israel was annexed to Judah and David ruled over both. Solomon also reigned over the two peoples, but after his death the two kingdoms were separated under Jeroboam and Rehoboam. From that time onwards Judah and Israel have remained distinct. They were carried into captivity separately, at different times and by different nations. Israel fell before the Assyrians, but Judah was not taken captive by the Babylonians until over a hundred years later.

As had been predicted by Ezra, a portion of Judah was permitted to return, in a lowly state, but Israel never returned, and there is no prophecy indicating that it ever will return until the end of the Times of the Gentiles.

In 721 B.C., which is generally taken as the date of the Assyrian captivity, the ten tribes of Israel drop out of the sacred history, and the only further reference to them is to be found in the prophetic portions of the Scriptures. The last secular reference to them is that of Josephus, who, writing in A.D. 70, said: "The entire body of the ten tribes are still beyond the River Euphrates, an immense multitude, not to be estimated by numbers."

Since that date the ten tribes have been lost.

Rehoboam became king over Judah and Benjamin,

and, after a time, Levi also came under his sway, because of the idolatry of Israel. These three tribes were carried into captivity by the Babylonians and on their return became known to the world as the Jews, a name which they have retained ever since.

For some centuries they maintained a struggling existence, falling by turn under the domination of the Persians, the Greeks, and finally the Romans. Then the Messiah came, and the Jews, as had been predicted, were instrumental in killing Him. "His blood be on us and on our children" was their cry, as indeed it has.

There are reasons, however, for believing that the tribe of Benjamin took no part in the events leading up to the Crucifixion and that they have avoided the terrible retribution which has been visited on Judah and Levi.

The story of Benjamin is of special interest. In the prophecies it was always reckoned as one of the ten tribes. Solomon, moreover, was specifically told that his son should have only one tribe to follow him. At the severance of the kingdoms, however, Benjamin went over to Judah and subsequently went into captivity with Judah and Levi.

Most of the apostles, including Paul, were Benjaminites. At the destruction of Jerusalem there is evidence that the tribe had become for the most part Christian, and, according to Josephus, its members escaped the worst terrors of that calamity. They are said to have fled from Judea and joined the ten tribes of Israel beyond the Euphrates.

The story of the expiation of the Jews is well known and only the chief points need be mentioned here.

After a struggle which lasted over five years, and which was one of the most bitter and ruthless conflicts that the world has known, Titus destroyed Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70. Over a million Jews

were killed in the course of the siege and capture of the city. Streams of blood gushed through the town. When the temple fell at last bodies lay heaped around the altar and blood flowed down the temple steps. The treasuries with their enormous wealth of gold and jewels were broken and rifled, and we are told that the value of the plunder was so great that in Syria gold fell to half its former value. Of those who escaped these horrors millions were sold into slavery.

About seventy years later the Jews had sufficiently recovered from this crushing blow to break out into revolt against the Roman rule. Then Adrian completed the dispersion of the race among the nations of the earth. He made the whole country of Palestine a desolation, expelled all the remaining Jewish inhabitants and forbade them on pain of death even to approach what once was Jerusalem. Again hundreds of thousands were slaughtered and a vast number sold into slavery. Those that remained took refuge in foreign lands.

From that time until the accession of Constantine, the Jews who had settled in the Roman Empire prospered. They appear to have taken an active part in the persecutions of the Christians during the reign of Nero.

When, however, the Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity their position was changed. They in their turn suffered indescribable persecution, and after some centuries of terrorism fled to Spain. Here again, thanks to their unrivalled business capacities, they prospered for a while and eventually they got the purse strings of the country into their hands. Gradually, too, they spread over other countries in Europe. Then came the Crusades, which are worthy of remembrance rather because of the persecutions of the Jews than for any victories over

the Saracens. In every country of Europe they were subjected to the most terrible tortures. Every army that marched to the Holy Land massacred Jews on the way, and for two hundred years this state of affairs continued.

Right down to the present day the history of the Jews has been one long chapter of relentless persecution. Their lot has always been one of desolation, degradation, and misery. In our own time there have been the massacres of Jews in Russia. The Jew is a pariah in every country save two. In Great Britain and the United States alone is a Jew treated as a fellow-man. There are about twelve millions of them, without land, government, or temple, still clinging to the observances of the religion which God gave to their forefathers and in their lives and history fulfilling every word that God has said concerning them.

We have seen that God is undoubtedly holding in reserve for His chosen people some hundred and ninety million acres of the richest land in the world, even as He promised to do. We also see that the Jews are not displaying any intense inclination to return to that land. This point has worried numerous commentators, and been the cause of innumerable attempts to explain away the difficulty. Such attempts usually end in the statement that, times having changed since the days of the Old Testament, God will unfortunately be unable to fulfil all His promises. In plain words these statements mean that God is a liar. These men of lukewarm faith who are so eager to adapt the Bible to what they call modern conditions nearly always end by representing God as not at all the great personage that He would have us believe, and that really He is something of a mountebank.

In discussing the thirty-first chapter of the Book of

Jeremiah, which deals with the promised return of the chosen people, Canon Driver, one of the chief exponents of the Higher Criticism, says : " It is evident that many of these prophecies have not been fulfilled, and that now circumstances have so changed that they never can be fulfilled ; but, like similar pictures drawn by other prophets, they remain as inspiring ideals for the future." Were the prophecies concerning the captivities, the rejection of the Messiah, and the subsequent desolations intended as mere inspiring ideals for the future ? No, the Jews know to their cost that those words constituted prophecies which were realised in all their terrible literalness. Why, then, should we treat the prophecies regarding the return, the only prophecies remaining to be fulfilled, as inspiring ideals and no more ? The fact that we do not happen to have clear enough sight to see how God will fulfil His promises is no reason why we should accuse Him of breaking His word. Before dismissing all these prophecies as meaningless babblings unworthy of further consideration and thereby deny the divinity of God's Word, would it not be well to show that we have some slight faith in Him and look a little more deeply into the Scriptures ?

Practically every writer who discusses this problem of the return of the chosen people to the land which God gave them writes as if the Jews and the Jews alone were the chosen people. They either assert with more optimism than discretion that the return of a miserable dribble of Jews to Palestine constitutes a fulfilment of the prophecy or else state that the prophecy cannot be fulfilled. Each school of thought is misguided. The most cursory glance at the prophecies is sufficient to show that the return will be a real return and God will reign over a nation, not a few hundred thousand refugees. The blundering faith of the first school is as dangerous as the half-

heartedness of the other. Both bring God's Word into contempt ; the one by alleging that it is full of needless exaggerations, the other by insinuating that it is inaccurate.

Those who read the Bible with any degree of care know that throughout the Book a distinction is nearly always drawn between Israel and Judah, between the ten tribes who have been lost and the tribes which we now know as the Jews. Have not the commentators who are worried as to the fulfilment of this promise forgotten this distinction ? One and all, they talk in the modern loose fashion which classes the whole chosen people in the one word, Jews. And the prophecies most undoubtedly refer to both Judah and Israel. Thus, in the thirtieth chapter of the Book of Jeremiah we read : " The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying : Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it . . . And ye shall be My people, and I will be your God . . . in the latter days ye shall consider it."

If these words mean anything at all they are an absolute promise on the part of God Himself to restore all His chosen people, both Judah and Israel, to the land which He gave to their forefathers, and to redeem that promise in the latter days which immediately precede the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

We may expect therefore to see not only the Jews returning to Palestine, but also the ten lost tribes. At first sight this appears to render the fulfilment of the prophecy less likely than ever, at any rate within

a reasonable time from the present. Indeed, to state that the return is imminent when only a few hundred thousand Jews are to be found in Palestine, and the lost tribes seemingly have not yet put in an appearance at all, looks on the face of it to be an absolute absurdity. And yet if we believe in God's Word we must believe that Israel and Judah must indeed return to Palestine.

To clear up the mystery we must first of all find the ten lost tribes. The finding of those tribes is obviously a discovery of supreme significance at the present time when there are so many indications that the Times of the Gentiles have almost run their course. That discovery is to lead to many wonders, for Judah and Israel are to unite and be one nation with one king, as is indicated by the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel: "And they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more."

Apart from any indications of prophecy it is obvious that the ten lost tribes must be in existence somewhere in the world to-day. They belong to the same stock as the Jews, who in spite of 1,900 years of the most ruthless persecution are not only in existence, but number some 12,000,000. The Jews are the descendants of only two tribes, hence we may expect that the descendants of the ten tribes are far more numerous than the Jews. This consideration shows the obvious futility of seeking for the lost tribes among the smaller peoples of Asia, such as the Afghans, as so many have done.

It has been asserted that it is possible that God has cut the ten tribes out of His scheme of things and that they have ceased to exist. All the prophecies are against this view and a further refutation occurs in the Book of Jeremiah: "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day and the

ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar: the Lord of Hosts is His name: if those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever." These words are a solemn declaration that so long as the sun, moon, and stars exist so also shall the nation of Israel exist.

It has already been pointed out that the distinction between Israel and Judah is maintained throughout the Bible, and there are numerous prophecies which refer only to one or other of the two peoples. For instance, we are told that out of Judah shall come the Messiah (1 Chron. v. 2); whilst Israel shall have a numerous seed (Gen. xlviii. 16), which shall spread abroad the blessings obtained from Christ (Isa. lxvi. 19). Judah is to be few in number (Jer. xv. 7; Ezek. xii. 16), but Israel is to be as the sand on the sea shore (Hos. i. 10). Judah is to be left desolate (Matt. xxiii. 38), but Israel's seed is to become sons of the living God (Hos. i. and ii.). Judah is to be separate from the nations, a people exposed to reproach and shame (Jer. xxiv. 9). Israel shall be lost among the Gentiles (Isa. liv. 3; Hos. vii. 8), and is to be sought out and discovered as the sons of the living God (Hos. i. 10; Ezek. xxxvii. 12).

After a period of punishment because of their sins the people of Israel are to be wanderers among the nations. "Lo, I will command, and I will cause to move to and fro the house of Israel among all nations" (Amos ix. 9). But after a time they are to be gathered into a place of safety. "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jer. xxxi. 10). Israel's seed shall increase as a fruitful bough with branches running over the wall. "Joseph is a

fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall ” (Gen. xlix. 22).

Israel is destined to colonise the desolate heritages and to change deserts into fruitful land. “ He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root ; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit ” (Isa. xxvii. 6). It will develop into a company of nations. “ And God said unto him, I am God Almighty : be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins ” (Gen. xxxv. 11). And Israel is to be a mighty nation, possessing the gates of its enemies. “ In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ” (Gen. xxii. 17).

The emblem of Israel is to be the unicorn. “ His horns are like the horns of unicorns : with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth : and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim and they are the thousands of Manasseh ” (Deut. xxxiii. 17). Israel shall lend money to many nations, but shall borrow from none. “ Thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow ” (Deut. xxviii. 12). Whereas Judah is always to retain its name, Israel is to be known by another name. “ And ye shall leave your name . . . for the Lord God shall call His servants by another name ” (Isa. lxv. 15). Israel shall become famous as a nation which suppresses slavery and tyranny. “ Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke ” (Isa. lviii. 6).

It is also predicted that Israel will develop into a great maritime power. “ I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers ” (Psa.

lxxxix. 25). This power will be a great conquering power, with a lion as one of its emblems. "And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who if he go through, both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver" (Mic. v. 8). As a result of this mightiness, Israel is destined to rule over many nations and to be subject to none. "Thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not rule over thee" (Deut. xv. 6). And finally Israel is to become heir of all the world. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom. iv. 13).

It has hitherto been usual to regard all these prophecies as having a spiritual meaning only, and as referring only to the Gospel and blessings of Christianity. It has already been shown that there is no reason why a prophecy should not have a literal as well as a spiritual fulfilment, indeed that in very many cases it is obvious that both fulfilments are necessary. In view, therefore, of the fact that the prophecies in regard to Judah have received a literal fulfilment it is to be expected that the prophecies to the other branch of the chosen people will receive a like fulfilment.

Turning to the New Testament, it is clear that Israel, which at the time of Christ's ministry had already been dispersed for more than 700 years, was often referred to by our Lord and His apostles. "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," were Christ's words when He sent forth the twelve apostles. The Samaritans were the descendants of the Assyrians who had settled in the land of the ten tribes when the

latter had been carried into captivity. The only tribe of the lost sheep of the house of Israel whom the apostles could reach was Benjamin, for the others were still beyond the Euphrates. Mention has already been made of the results which attended their labours among the Benjaminites, to which tribe, indeed, most of the apostles belonged. The tribe adopted Christianity and so escaped the horrors which befell the Jews.

Christ Himself declared that "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24). Again in speaking to the Jews He said : " Therefore say I unto you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof " (Matt. xxi. 43). That the Jews themselves thoroughly understood Christ's meaning is obvious from their words amongst themselves : " Whither will He go that we shall not find Him ? Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles and teach the Gentiles ? " (John vii. 35).

The apostles themselves often make reference to the lost tribes. For instance, on the day of the ascension they asked Christ whether He would " at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel " (Acts i. 6). St. Paul says that " blindness in part is happened unto Israel until the fulness of the nations be come in." James indited his epistle to the " twelve tribes scattered abroad." He wrote in the year A.D. 60, at which time the Jews were dispersed as well as the ten tribes comprising Israel.

There is only one nation in the world to-day which can claim to fulfil all these prophecies, and that nation is the British. Substitute Great Britain for Israel and the predictions will all of them hold good.

Israel is to be a multitudinous race blessed with immense power. In 1700 the British race numbered only a few millions, in 1800 it had grown to about

25,000,000, but in the year 1900 it numbered no less than 130,000,000. At this rate of progress a few decades will see the British more numerous than all the other nations of the earth put together. The population of the British Empire is seven times the population of Germany, nine times that of France, and five times that of the United States.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth the population of England was about 4,000,000, of Scotland about 1,000,000 and of Ireland also 1,000,000. To-day the population of the British Isles is more than 45,000,000, in spite of the fact that in the meantime Britain has been the greatest colonising nation in the world and that there are many millions of Britons and descendants of Britons to be found on the face of the earth. Why has it only been since the reign of Queen Elizabeth that God's promise concerning the fruitfulness of Israel began to be fulfilled ? It has been suggested that the answer to this question lies in the fact that it was not until the middle of the reign of Good Queen Bess that the Reformation became an accomplished fact. At that time, to use the words of the historian Green, " England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. It was the one book which was familiar to every Englishman ; it was read in the churches and was read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm."

What else could this be than the " opening of the little book " referred to in the Book of Revelation ? The formal adoption by the nation of the little book, in other words the Bible, was a national testimony that the religious errors of the past had been swept away and that God was now revealed to all who had the eyes to see.

It is an undoubted fact that, whenever the nation

has departed from the principles of the Protestant Reformation and shown a disposition to indulge in the inveterate sin of Israel, idolatry and superstition, a cloud has fallen over its fortunes. Charles II and James II were both of them Romanists, and during their reigns the fortunes of Britain fell to the lowest point within modern times. Her enemies put her to shame, as when the Dutch fleet sailed up the Medway ; on the Continent her influence and credit became negligible, and at home there were civil and social disorders. But whenever the Protestant spirit has been strong among her people, Britain has flourished exceedingly. Under Oliver Cromwell, Britain's army and navy were feared throughout the civilised world. Under William of Orange and Anne, British arms achieved their mightiest and most glorious victories ; and at the beginning of the last century, the time when the great missionary societies took their rise, Britain was the saviour of the liberties of Europe.

Again, the British Empire to-day comprises, roughly speaking, three Europes. It is fifty-two times the size of Germany, fifty-three times the size of France, and nearly four times that of the United States. We are gradually filling every continent and making the whole world our home. Our empire extends over 9,000,000 square miles, or more than a fifth of the habitable surface of the globe, and is the greatest empire of ancient or modern times. Britain is indeed "a nation and a company of nations."

Israel is to be a great maritime country. The British navy is acknowledged to be the most powerful in the world, as indeed recent events have proved. Moreover, half the sea-borne commerce of the world is in Britain's hands and the aggregate tonnage of our mercantile marine is over 10,000,000 tons. We are the recognised carriers for the whole world.

Israel is to be a blessing to the whole world. With-

out boasting, the British can say that their rule is for good. There is not a people that has not prospered under the Union Jack. And there is not a region in the world where the British are not striving for good. In full accord with the prophecies Britain has transformed desert wastes into fertile tracts, as in Egypt, and has ever been foremost in raising the down-trodden. Over a hundred years ago slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire and twenty million pounds was paid in compensation. It was not until sixty years later that the civil war in America resulted in the freeing of the slaves in the States. British missionaries are in every corner of the globe. Britain has translated the Bible into nearly four hundred languages ; Germany has translated it into only one—her own. In one year Britain contributes towards the cost of the world's missions more than twelve times the amount contributed by all the other nations put together. As Mr. Rudyard Kipling says :

They do not consider the meaning of things,
 They consult no creed or clan ;
 Behold they clap the slave on the back,
 And behold he becometh a man.

They terribly carpet the earth with the dead,
 And before their cannons cool
 They walk unarmed by twos and threes,
 To call the living to school.

Israel is to be an invincible nation. No nation has a roll of victories and conquests comparable with that of the British. It has been said that Britain always blunders through her wars. But she always wins, and therein lies the evidence of God's constant watch over the people of His choice. The British have been favoured by Providence in a most amazing manner. More often than not Britain's first line of defence has been the elements. In 1588 the great

Spanish Armada set sail. It comprised 130 ships, many of immense size, manned by 28,000 men. Against this force the English had only 101 ships, only 28 of which were properly equipped for fighting. But a storm annihilated the Armada as completely as if it had met a fleet of modern Dreadnoughts.

In 1652 Van Tromp boasted that he would sweep the English off the seas. But a storm dispersed his fleet. In 1719 a combined French and Spanish fleet attempted the invasion of England, but off Cape Finisterre a storm sent all their hopes to the bottom. In 1744 another attempt was made and Sir Robert Walpole announced that "nothing but the wind has saved us." Again, in 1779 France and Spain combined their fleets, and the mightiest squadron since the Armada set sail against England. But the sailors were attacked with a pestilential disease of such virulence that the great fleet fell a comparatively easy prey to the English.

Innumerable other instances might be cited. For a recent case we have only to go back to the Boer War. At that time Britain was in a critical position. She was the most hated power in Europe. France was burning under the Fashoda incident ; Germany, ever her covert enemy, openly exulted in the prospect of the Boer farmers giving Britannia a drubbing ; Russia was avowedly hostile. Anglophobia was the order of the day. The war drained Britain's resources to the utmost : at one time she had only four regiments available for home defence. There was nothing to prevent the other powers from taking advantage of her weakness to pay off old scores and helping themselves to the richest of her colonies. But just as the storms came to her assistance in the past, so the Chinese crisis arose to monopolise the attention of Europe at the very time when Britain was at her weakest.

Mere chance is no explanation of these things. Neither is the theory that has been advanced that they are due to divine interference with the scheme of the universe. To say that God has to be continually interfering with the course of nature in order to effect His purposes is to say that He is imperfect. The storm with its thunder and lightning which enabled Clive to win the battle of Arcot and gave India to Britain was not a firework display on the part of God, specially designed for the occasion ; it was a perfectly natural event arising from perfectly natural causes. But God knew that the storm would arise and that Clive would benefit by it. The same is true of all the other storms which have saved Britain in her times of peril. They were all natural events. To the unthinking they appear as the merest chances, but we have only to contemplate them to see in this interweaving of history and nature the divine scheme of things in all its serene immensity. God knew that the storm would disperse the Armada and that Britain would be saved. That it should be so was part of His order of things. Britain, then, must be destined by God to play some great part in the future of mankind.

It was prophesied that the seed of Israel should possess the gates of his enemies. Again Great Britain fulfils the prophecy with startling completeness. Gibraltar, Malta, Crete, Port Said, Suez, Aden, Socotra, Peshawur, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapore, Malacca, Hong Kong, Wei-hai-wei, the Bermudas, and the Channel Islands are but a few of the " gates " Britain possesses. In this connection it is interesting to note that whereas King George travelled 16,000 miles in 1901 and did not once set foot on any but British soil or obtain supplies from any foreign nation, Prince Henry of Prussia could never have made his journey to the German

possessions in the East if he had not been allowed to get supplies at the British coaling stations or "gates."

Israel is to lend to all nations and borrow from none. That indeed is the exact position of Great Britain. It was Britain's vast financial resources and huge loans to other nations that brought about the fall of Napoleon. Similarly to-day, Britain's wealth, its "silver bullets," will be the deciding factor in the present struggle against the man who considers that the mantle of the great Corsican has fallen upon his shoulders. British credit stands higher than that of any other nation. The sovereign is the only coin that is honoured in every quarter of the globe at its face value. Britain has made immense loans to foreign governments and to foreign municipalities, the interest on these loans amounting to some 70,000,000 sterling a year. On the other hand, Britain has never borrowed a penny from any foreign nation. She has not only financed her own great empire, but in addition has provided the necessary money for carrying out vast undertakings in every corner of the globe.

"The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, and observe the Sabbath, throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant : it is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever" (Ex. xxxi. 16, 17). Although the Sabbath might be kept with far greater diligence in Britain than it is to-day, yet it is an undoubted fact that the British observe the Sabbath more than any other nation in the world. "I assert without hesitation," said Bishop Ryle, "that the only countries on the face of the globe in which you will find a true observance of the Sabbath are Great Britain and her colonies." The "Continental Sunday" has become a byword. Races, theatres, dances, bull-fights, sports are the things to which the Sabbath is given over in the cities of the continental nations. During the last Exhibition at Paris every

section was open on Sunday, except those of Great Britain and the United States, which were completely closed.

Numerous other prophecies concerning Israel might be mentioned, all of which have received a striking literal fulfilment in the British Empire and so add to the evidence in favour of the theory that the British race is composed of the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel which were taken captive by the Assyrians 700 years before Christ and have ever since been lost to history. As Joseph Chamberlain said : " What is this empire of ours ? We are brought face to face with the greatest problem that has ever been presented to a nation. It is a new problem. We have no particular experience to go by, but there has been thrown upon us, as I believe in the providence of God, a responsibility such as has never been placed upon any nation or any race before. We have to discover how to bring together in a great union of peace and affection territories vaster than any that have ever owned any common interest before. We have to unite varying interests, varying races, and different aspirations, and we have to make of them an organised whole. We talk of the British Empire. I think that my countrymen have only just begun to appreciate what it is. It is not an empire. We use that word, but it is not an empire in the sense in which other empires have existed on the globe. It is not an empire in the sense in which the German Empire now dominates a great portion of Europe. It is not a union in the sense in which there is the union in the United States of America. It is not even a kingdom in the sense in which Italy with all her varying races and interests has been united for common purposes. It is a great potentiality, the greatest that was ever given to man. . . . How do we in these two small islands come to have this gigantic heritage,

and with it these gigantic responsibilities, which are unknown in the case of other nations ? . . . This empire has been growing until it has become greater than anything that was ever known before. We talk of great empires ; we talk of Rome and Constantinople in the past ; we talk of modern empires ; we talk of Russia ; we talk of the great confederation of the United States. They are nothing by comparison with the inheritance which has devolved upon us."

Truly, the more we contemplate the marvels of the British Empire the more certain we become that it has been marked out for special favours by God. We cannot say that we are grateful for those favours or that we deserve them. But there they are, and the only explanation that can be given is that the British are the missing portion of the chosen people.

CHAPTER VII

THE IMAGE AND BRITAIN

AT the present time one of the most interesting chapters to be found in the whole of the Bible is the second of the Book of Daniel, where there is recorded the vision of the monstrous image seen by Nebuchadnezzar. It has already been shown how from the symbolism of that image it has been deduced that we are fast approaching the end of the Times of the Gentiles. It has also been held that the image may be regarded as symbolising the destinies of the British Empire.

The Babylonian king beheld an image of dazzling brightness, such as would appeal to the heathen mind. This image was of a monstrous human form, with its arms outstretched. Its head was gold, its breast and arms silver, its belly of brass, its legs iron, and its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. Then a stone cut without hands smites the image on the feet and becomes a great mountain. The image is smashed to pieces by the stone so that "the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces together, and became as the chaff of the summer threshing floor; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Daniel explains that the image represented a series of four great empires followed by a fifth, which is

utterly unlike the other four. No names are definitely given for these empires, but the prophet provides the key to the discovery of their identity when he informs Nebuchadnezzar that "thou art the head of gold." Hence the head represented the Babylonian Empire of which Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler. The next kingdom, that of silver, was to be inferior to Babylon, and it is clear from history that the Medo-Persian Empire was the one referred to. The third kingdom of brass is the Grecian Empire, which followed the Medo-Persian.

The fourth kingdom was to have two distinct stages in its career; the first stage was prefigured by the legs of iron, the second by the feet of iron and clay. The iron signifies that in its first stage the kingdom will enjoy the strength of unity. The clay in the feet shows that in the second stage the kingdom was destined to be partly strong and partly weak. The Roman is the only empire known to history that conforms with the description of the fourth kingdom. During the first five hundred years of its career the Roman Empire was strong as iron; it conquered and ruled the greater portion of the then known world. But in A.D. 476 the Roman Empire fell, and this once united empire was broken up into a number of independent kingdoms. Charlemagne and subsequently Napoleon attempted to reunite the fragments of the empire of the Cæsars, but both failed as had been predicted. "Whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another even as iron is not mixed with clay."

There remains the fifth kingdom, represented by the stone. This was destined to be the most important kingdom of all. Daniel speaks of it in the following words: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be

destroyed ; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

This kingdom is to be a literal kingdom, here on earth. It has been suggested that the stone kingdom is to be a spiritual kingdom and that it represents the kingdom of Christ. But this would spoil the harmony of the whole prophecy. Daniel himself indicated that the other four kingdoms were literal kingdoms, and there is no reason why we should confine our attention wholly to a spiritual interpretation of the fifth.

This literal kingdom is to have a world-wide dominion. To one people, and to one people only, has it been promised that it shall spread over all the earth, and that people is Israel.

Alone among the empires the fifth is to be perpetual. Whereas each of the first four kingdoms has in its turn risen, declined, and fallen, the stone kingdom is to have no successor. Again Israel is the only nation that has been promised continuance so long as the world lasts. "Thus saith the Lord ; If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth ; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David, My servant " (Jer. xxxiii. 25).

Finally the stone kingdom is to be set up and directed by God. Hence its characteristics of universality and perpetuity. The other four empires have decayed and fallen because they were the handiwork of men, but the fifth kingdom is the handiwork of God, therefore it shall continue in greatness for ever. And again the only people whom we know to be the chosen people of God is that of Israel.

But Daniel not only indicates the identity of the fifth kingdom ; he also gives the date of its rise. God

is to set it up in the time of "these kings." Just as the prophet used Nebuchadnezzar, the king, to indicate that by the first kingdom was meant the Babylonian Empire, so these kings are used to indicate that the rise of the fifth empire is to take place during the time when the Roman Empire is in its second divided state. The fragments of the empire of the Cæsars are the countries of Europe—France, Italy, Spain, and the rest of them. Has a great world-empire risen during the times of those countries? Has it stretched all over the face of the earth? Can it be said of that empire that it enjoys the protection of God? History answers with certainty that there is such an empire and that it is the British, the greatest empire that the world has ever known; an empire that is more than an empire and which comprises, in the words of the prophet, a nation and a company of nations.

It has been suggested that in view of the arguments brought forward above we may be able to obtain some hints as to the probable outcome of the present war and the results of the subsequent great wars which the Scriptures assert will be a sign of the approaching end of the dispensation. If that be the case it is obvious that the stone kingdom will emerge triumphant from all these conflicts, for it smashes the whole image into fragments.

As to this overthrow of the other powers, it is obvious that Britain will not defeat the literal kingdoms of Rome, Greece, Persia, and Babylon, but the modern representatives of those powers. An iron power with feet of clay would be a very fitting description of Germany to-day. Iron signifies military strength, and Germany is the greatest militarist power in the world. Moreover Germany's might rests on a very insecure foundation, similar to clay—the infidel doctrines of Nietzsche and his disciples.

Hence we may assume from the symbolism of the image that Britain will be instrumental in administering a crushing defeat upon Germany. Recent events show that this is by no means unlikely. But for the appearance of Britain in the field there can be little doubt that Germany would have succeeded in her plan of crushing France as well as Belgium, and adding to her military glories. As matters stand, however, there is every indication that, thanks to Britain's participation in the war, Germany's days as a military power are numbered.

There remain the other kingdoms which it is predicted that the stone kingdom will defeat. Will the brass power be a nation like the Greeks, a people famed for their artistic achievements? Will the silver power be an eastern kingdom like Persia? Will the golden power be a power similar to that of Babylon, a people governed by the greatest autocrat of his day?

These are riddles for which it would be vain guesswork to hazard an answer. It is sufficient to know that the powers will be overthrown, even as Germany will be overthrown.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MODERN HISTORY OF THE LOST TRIBES

IF the British are the modern representatives of the ten tribes that were taken captive by Assyria and subsequently became lost to the knowledge of man, then we may expect to find various peculiarities in the past and present history of the nation which go to confirm the theory. Here, of course, we are dealing with secular history, and it may be well to point out the difference between secular history and divine history. God wrote His history of man and the earth through the words of His prophets. He knew all and foresaw all, and we know that up to the present, through all the ages that have rolled over this world of ours, prophetic history has proved to be one of meticulous accuracy. With man, on the other hand, the case is very different. He cannot look into the future; he can only look backwards. And his sight is human and very imperfect. It can pierce only a short distance with any degree of clearness. Soon the past becomes hazy and indistinct, and after a time becomes, like the future, a matter of what is little better than guess-work built up on the slenderest basis.

We have a very clear knowledge of British history since the times of the Norman invasion; our knowledge of the Saxon and Roman periods is less complete; we know practically nothing of the ancient Britons; and the preceding ages are lost in the fog

of oblivion. But God's history goes back to the times when there was no earth and no sun, and it stretches forward through to the end of time.

In the light of his discoveries man has attempted to make up for his lack of clarity of vision by guesswork as to the history of the periods of which he has only an incomplete knowledge or no knowledge at all. The unreliability of these guesses is evinced by the fact that he is continually having to revise them to meet the difficulties presented by fresh discoveries. In the realms of science, which is man's inductive and deductive history of the universe, new discoveries are always being made which revolutionise previous theories; for instance, the discovery of radium necessitated the revision of the atomic theory, which but a short time ago was considered to be an absolutely immutable law. It is the same in the realms of man's guess history of himself; new monuments are continually being discovered and fresh knowledge obtained which reveal hitherto hidden truths and cause us to alter the theories we have laboriously built up.

We must not, therefore, expect to find absolute evidence in secular history in support of the theory that the British are the lost tribes of Israel, but can only ascertain how far that theory fits in with the guesses at the past which have been made in the light of such knowledge as has been revealed to us.

Can we trace the wanderings of the lost tribes from Media to Britain? It has been held that we can, and with more certainty than we can trace the wanderings of any other race.

In the book of Esdras, the second of the Apocrypha, it is stated that "the ten tribes took this counsel among themselves, that they should leave the multitude of the heathen and go forth into a further country, that there they might keep the law, which

they had never kept in their own land, and they passed by way of the Euphrates."

That this actually happened and that the tribes escaped from Media is confirmed by the historian Josephus, who, writing in the year A.D. 70, says: "The ten tribes are now beyond the Euphrates and are an immense multitude."

This escape from Media must have been effected some time before the coming of Christ, for at the time of the Greek and Roman Empires they had already lost their name. Now the people known to the Greeks and Romans under the names of Goths, Scythians, and Sakai undoubtedly came from Media and from across the Euphrates. The historians Herodotus, Pliny, and Ptolemy all bear witness to that fact. Moreover a large number of them settled for a time on the shores of the Black Sea, from which district they were subsequently driven towards the north-west by later invaders from Asia, a people coming from a land farther east than Media, the forefathers of the present Slav peoples. In the Crimea many evidences of the settlement of the Scythians or Goths are to be found. There is, for instance, a gravestone the inscription of which is still decipherable. "Zadok, son of Moses, died 4,000 years after creation, 785 years after our exile." This Zadok must have been a member of the lost tribes, for the Scythian occupation of the Crimea coincides in point of time with the number of years mentioned on the stone as having elapsed since the captivity—that is, the Assyrian captivity of the ten tribes.

Amongst other evidence that these early settlers by the shores of the Black Sea were of Israelitish origin is the little town of Isakcha, which is known to be very ancient. The name is obviously Israelitish.

There is evidence, therefore, that the Goths, or Scythians or Sakai, as they were variously called, were the descendants of the ten tribes.

After a time this people was driven towards the north-west. Some went to Scandinavia, others settled in western Europe. From there came the Saxons who captured England from the ancient Britons and settled in the land. The similarity between the words Sakai and Saxons is obvious. Moreover, John Milton in his history of Britain remarks: "The Saxons were a people thought by good writers to be descended from the Scythians or Sakai, who with a flood of other nations came into Europe about the time of the decline of the Roman Empire." In connection with the words Saxon and Sakai it is also interesting to remember the words of the twelfth verse of the twenty-first chapter of Genesis: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Originally Isakaions, the sons of Isaac, the name of the people gradually evolved into Saxons.

It is well known that the Normans, who conquered the Saxons and afterwards blended with them to form the present British people, were not Frenchmen, but Northmen who, coming from Scandinavia, forced the French to cede to them a portion of their country, namely Normandy. These Normans were a remarkable people. In describing them Lord Macaulay says: "The Northmen were the foremost race of Christendom. Their valour, their ferocity, made them conspicuous from the Black Sea to the Atlantic Ocean." It should also be noted that the Norman standard was a wolf.

Now, the tribe of Benjamin also had a wolf for its emblem. "Benjamin shall ravine as a wolf" (Gen. xlix. 27). And Benjamin was noted among the tribes of Israel for its fierce valour. Moreover, as has been mentioned in a former chapter, the tribe

of Benjamin had a peculiar history. Although included in the prophecies with the ten tribes, they joined with Judah, went into captivity with that tribe to Babylon, and returned to Jerusalem. Unlike Judah, however, they did not reject the Messiah, but became Christians. For this they emerged unscathed from the horrors of the fall of Jerusalem and were permitted to rejoin the ten tribes, at that time on the other side of the Euphrates. As they were the first of the tribes to adopt Christianity, it would not be surprising if they were to develop into the foremost race in Christendom, which distinction, Lord Macaulay informs us, was held by the Normans. Again, it is only natural to assume that the Normans and the Saxons must have had very close racial affinities, otherwise they could not have blended with such remarkable ease to form the homogeneous and distinctive people known to the world to-day as the British.

The inference to be drawn from all these considerations is obvious. The Northmen were the descendants of the Benjaminites, who, as had been indicated by their peculiar history, were destined to play a leading part in the fortunes of the ten tribes during the Times of the Gentiles.

If the British are the modern descendants of the ten lost tribes, then King George must belong to the house of David. This is indicated by the following passages found in the Scriptures: "The Lord God . . . chose me . . . to be king over Israel for ever: for He hath chosen Judah to be the ruler" (1 Chron. xxviii. 4); and "For thus saith the Lord: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer. xxxiii. 17).

It is a remarkable fact that the genealogy of the royal house of Britain can be traced back far into the past. It goes back through James the First of

England and Sixth of Scotland to Kenneth MacAlpine who became the first king of Scotland in the year A.D. 834. MacAlpine was descended from Fergus Moore, who was king of Argyll in A.D. 487, and who, in his turn, was descended from the kings of Ireland, whose ancestry can be traced back through fifty-four kings to the year 580 B.C.

Legend has it that at that time King Heremon of Ireland married an Eastern princess, named Tea Zephia, who was none other than the daughter of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. According to the legend, Tea Zephia had, with some other daughters of Zedekiah, escaped from the Babylonians.

In support of the legend it has been proved that the fall of Judah before the Babylonians occurred about the year 580 B.C. And it had been prophesied that a remnant of Judah should escape in order that it might "bear fruit" elsewhere. "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kings, to root out, to pull down, to destroy, to throw down and to build and to plant" (Jer. i. 10). "And the remnant that has escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward: for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion" (2 Kings xix. 30, 31). Indeed, the sixth verse of the forty-third chapter of Jeremiah is an account of the escape of the remnant. "Men and women and children, and the King's daughters and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah."

The Irish legend, therefore, has the support of Scripture in that we know that a remnant of Judah was saved from Babylon in order that it might raise seed in another part of the earth, and also, that included in that remnant were the daughters of King

Zedekiah, who was, of course, of the royal house of David.

There is also historical evidence in favour of the legend, for it is an undoubted fact that many new things were introduced into Ireland during the time of King Heremon. The school of the prophets was founded there. Idolatry was overthrown and the worship of Jehovah introduced in its stead. Moreover, the word Tara, a national possession of which every Irishman is proud, is a Hebrew word meaning "the law of the two tables."

In connection with the relation between the British Royal Family and the House of David it is interesting to note that one of the names of the Prince of Wales is David, and that in 1924 he will be thirty years of age. It is a remarkable coincidence that by that date exactly 3,000 years will have elapsed since David was anointed King over Israel.

The royal arms of England are the Lion and the Unicorn. No other existing nation possesses these emblems, and the only peoples of the past that have had them are Judah and Israel. In many passages in the Old Testament Judah is referred to as a lion, but he is never given the emblem of a unicorn. Israel, on the other hand, is referred to as both animals. Thus, in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Numbers there occurs the passage: "He [Israel] hath as it were, the strength of an unicorn, he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion. Who shall stir him up?" Hence, if the British are the lost tribes they have a divine right for the use of their coat of arms.

The unicorn is a blend of two animals, the horse and the bull. The head, body, and legs of the animal are those of a horse; the feet, tail, and horn are

those of a bull. The emblem of a bull stood for the house of Joseph among the ten tribes. The numerous "white horses" carved on the hillsides in various parts of the country are obvious evidence that the emblem of the Saxons was a horse. And according to the authoritative work on the subject, "National Arms," the ensign on the banner of Hengist, the Saxon king who led the invasion of England, was a white horse with the feet of a bull.

No nation in the world possesses such an interesting relic of antiquity as the Stone of Destiny, which forms part of the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey, and on which every British king from Edward I to George V has been crowned, with the solitary exception of Queen Mary, who, being a Romanist, had a special coronation chair built and blessed by the Pope. This chair is to be seen in Winchester Cathedral.

It is a rough, oblong stone, 22 inches long, 13 inches broad, and 11 inches deep. It is a bluish colour, with veins of red and white running through it. It was brought to London by Edward I from Scotland, where it had been the Coronation Stone of kings for over 800 years. The first Scottish king to be crowned upon it was Fergus Moore. Previous to his time the stone had been in Ireland, where fifty-four kings had been crowned upon it. It is remarkable how the stone has followed the line of the house of David from the days of the King Heremon, who married the Eastern princess and who ruled in Ireland shortly after the time of the Babylonian captivity, down to the present day. It is equally remarkable that there is no stone of a similar nature to be found in Ireland, while in Palestine such stone is comparatively common.

In the twenty-seventh chapter of Genesis we read :
"And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went

toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night because the sun was set ; and he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold ! the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac : the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed ; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth ; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south ; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land ; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it."

The Jews have a tradition that the stone in Westminster Abbey is that very stone. They believe that the stone was handed down from Jacob to Joseph, as the words referring to " the stone of Israel " (Gen. xlix. 24) may be taken to imply, that it accompanied the Israelites in the Egyptian captivity, and subsequently formed part of Solomon's temple. It may be that Paul had the stone in his mind when he spoke of " the rock that followed them " (1 Cor. x. 4).

The Irish legend has it that the stone was brought

to Ireland by Tea Zephia, the daughter of King Zedekiah, who escaped from the Babylonian captivity with the "remnant of Judah," and came to Ireland, where she married King Heremon.

It is, of course, impossible to verify the legend exactly; all we can say is that it is quite possible that the story of the legend has at least a basis of truth. At any rate, the Irish legend and the Jewish legend both go to support the theory that this remarkable stone is destined to play a part in the fortunes of the house of David. It should be noted, also, that the two legends are quite separate and distinct, and that it is impossible that they should have had a common origin except in the truth. On the whole, we may agree with Sir Walter Scott, who wrote of the stone:

Unless the fates have faithless grown,
And prophet's voice be vain,
Where'er is found this Sacred Stone,
The wanderer's race shall reign.

Another striking coincidence between the two royal houses is the fact that the ritual employed in the British Coronation Service conforms with that used by the Israelites. Just as King David was anointed with oil by the high-priest, so was King George anointed with oil by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Various objections have been raised against the theory that the British are the ten tribes. It has, for instance, been objected that the theory is contrary to the spirit of Christianity, which admits all nations and favours none. To this it may be answered that it is obviously part of God's scheme of things that there should be one favoured people. The Old Testament was not blotted out as useless by the New. God has not altered since the far-off days when He

made the covenant with Israel. "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord : the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people ; but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers " (Deut. vii. 6). That great oath stands to-day just as it stood in the days before the coming of the Messiah.

Christ Himself referred to the separate existence of the ten tribes among the nations of the earth, and He indicated that part of His and His disciples' mission was to restore the "lost sheep of the house of Israel " to their former communion with God.

Moreover, Christ said in so many words that there was to be a favoured nation which was to enjoy the results of His ministry. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [the Jews] and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. xxi. 43). And we know that, within thirty years of the Crucifixion, Christianity had been introduced into Britain.

It has been objected that, if Britain is Israel, then the return to the chosen land will be a physical impossibility. The answer to this lies in the third chapter of Jeremiah : "Return, O backsliding children, said the Lord, I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." In other words, that we are not to expect to see every Jew and every Israelite on the face of the earth troop back to Palestine, a proceeding which would obviously result in the death of most of them from either starvation or suffocation. The return is to take the form of a return of power. Just as Britain holds India, so will Israel hold Palestine. At present the land is held by the Turks. So, nominally, was Egypt until a few

weeks ago. But, in accordance with the prophecy that " Ephraim shall return unto Egypt " (Hos. ix. 3), the land of the Pharaohs is now under British rule. Is it not possible that the end of this war will see Palestine following after Egypt, and coming under the rule of the British ?—or, shall we say, the Israelites ?

CHAPTER IX

ARE THE UNITED STATES THE TRIBE OF MANASSEH ?

THE story of Ephraim and Manasseh is one of the most interesting to be found in the Bible. Jacob was the inheritor of the promises, made to Abraham by God. These promises included an everlasting covenant, the possession of the land of Canaan, a vast seed, the fatherhood of many nations, the blessing of all nations through that seed. Esau had despised the birthright, and Jacob had coveted and obtained it. To him God confirmed His promises and gave the patriarch the name of Israel. As a punishment for his sin, Reuben, Jacob's first-born, was denied the birthright and it was given to Joseph, and in turn settled on his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Of these two sons Manasseh was the elder. The description of the blessing of Joseph's two sons by Jacob is given in Gen. xlviii. 15-19 :

“And Jacob blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads ; and let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac ; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him : and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph

said unto his father, Not so, my father : for this is the first-born ; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it. He [Manasseh] also shall become a people, and he shall also be great ; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations."

From these words it is evident that there is a distinct nation somewhere in the world to-day which represents the tribe of Manasseh. They will be allied by blood to the descendants of the other tribes, but they will not constitute so great a nation as the latter. Moreover, they will have some form of government other than a monarchy, for the kingship was reserved to the royal house of David. Obviously there are only two nations in the world to-day which fulfil these conditions, Great Britain and the United States. The Americans are Britain's "cousins," they do not possess an empire comparable with the British, and they have always favoured the republican form of government since the days when they cut themselves off from England.

In Isa. xlix. 20 we read : "The children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me : give place to me that I may dwell." It is remarkable how strikingly these words describe the rise of the United States.

The States had their origin in the persecution which was carried on against certain of the Protestants during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. These Protestants, who were known as Separatists and Brownists, were strongly opposed to all ceremonies and superstitions, and, sooner than obey the Queen's decree of uniformity, they fled to foreign lands. Many went to Holland, but after a time a scheme for going to the great New World was set on foot. To this movement

was due the voyage of the *Mayflower*, in which forty-one emigrants and their families sailed to what is now known as the port of Plymouth in the State of Massachusetts. As a result of the tyranny of Charles I and his ministers, thousands more went to join the Puritan settlers. They came from all classes of the community, but all were animated by the same desire to be free to worship their God in accordance with the dictates of their conscience. Most of them came from Lincolnshire and the neighbouring eastern counties. So the process has continued. Year by year thousands have left Britain for the United States; sometimes religious considerations have urged them to go, sometimes the desire for wealth, sometimes lack of opportunities in the position in which they find themselves. Just as Isaiah predicted, they have cried again and again, "The place is too strait for me, give place to me that I may dwell."

It is remarkable that Britain should have lost her American colonies. She had muddled through a thousand worse dangers than the revolt of a handful of colonists. And yet the power that was destined to save Europe from Napoleon and to retain her Indian Empire in spite of the great Mutiny, was defeated with comparative ease by a few of her own unruly children. Again, we can only say that it was in accordance with the divine order of things that it should be so. We can see that it was inevitable that, sooner or later, the two peoples would separate, and we realise how sure was the prophecy that Manasseh should also become a people.

Finally, as a matter of interest, the following remarkable relation between the United States and Manasseh is worthy of notice. Manasseh was the thirteenth tribe of Israel; there were thirteen original states in the great American Republic, and these were

represented in the national flag by thirteen stripes ; on the seal of the States thirteen arrows and thirteen stars appear ; the dollar contains thirteen stars, and thirteen letters form the scroll ; on the other side of the coin the eagle has thirteen tail-feathers, thirteen wing-feathers, thirteen arrow-heads, thirteen horizontal lines, and thirteen perpendicular lines ; finally, there are thirteen letters in the national motto, " E Pluribus Unum."

CHAPTER X

ARE THE GERMANS THE ASSYRIANS ?

IF Britain is Israel, then are the Germans the hereditary enemies of Israel ? Are they the descendants of those Assyrians of old who took Israel captive some seven hundred years before Christ ? If they are, will they repeat their former exploits, and humble Israel to the dust and blot her out from among the Powers of the earth ? It is a common saying that history repeats itself. Is the world to be given a further proof of that statement ? These are questions which all are asking in some form or other.

In the first place, we know that the present inhabitants of Germany are the descendants of people who, like so many others, passed from Asia into Europe at about the beginning of the Christian era, and also that these migrants came from the same part of Asia as was the scene of the ancient Assyrian Empire. Because the ancestors of the present British race came from, roughly speaking, the same region it has been argued that there must be a sort of blood relationship between the Germans and the British, and that they ought to be the friendliest of peoples.

It is obvious, however, that the two peoples have seldom displayed the slightest manifestation of any such relationship. There has always been but very little in common between them. Even when, as in the days of Napoleon, a common danger forced them to fight shoulder to shoulder, their relations^{at} were

never cordial. In whatever aspect the two peoples are regarded, they are found to be utterly opposed to one another. Their ideals, customs, manners, characteristics, outlook, and ambitions are all different. The Briton has generally had a contempt for the German, and the German has always hated the Briton, either covertly or openly. Remember the outburst of Anglophobia in Germany at the time of the Boer War, consider Germany's long preparation for the present war, how she has subordinated everything to "the day" when she hopes to trample Britain in the dust; think of the virulence of the hatred which Germany has manifested against Britain during these last few months. Why are all German eyes turned towards London? why do the Kaiser's troops chant the "Song of Hate against England" before their War-lord? why does every German journal and newspaper treat all Britain's allies with more or less contempt, and reserve the full force of its wrath for England? Why do they shriek that England and England alone is the enemy, and why does the slightest and most insignificant success against British arms send Berlin crazy with delight? The only explanation of this frenzied outburst is that it is due to a deep and ingrained animosity, the seeds of which must have been planted ages ago.

In direct contrast to this delirious hatred is the demeanour of the British towards the Germans. On all sides the seriousness of the people and the absence of a chauvinistic spirit have been the most noticeable feature of the conflict so far as Britain is concerned. This is the greatest manifestation of the sober spirit of religion which the British have displayed since the days of their Puritan ancestors, and it proves that they have lost nothing of the qualities which made Cromwell's Ironsides feared from end to end of Europe.

Is not this remarkable contrast exceedingly reminiscent of the contrast between the attitude of the ancient Israelites and Assyrians one to another ? Throughout their history, even in the sorest tribulation and the harshest captivity, the Israelites had an innate contempt for the Gentiles. Unconsciously they knew that, in spite of all their sins, they were the chosen people of God and that He would one day fulfil all the glorious promises which He had made to their forefathers. The Assyrians and all the other Gentile peoples who oppressed Israel hated the seed of Jacob and delighted to harrass and humble it, because unconsciously they knew that Jehovah was the true God, and that His people were destined to be favoured more than the people of any other god.

As it was in the case of the Israelites and Assyrians, so it is in that of Britain and Germany. The fact that one people enjoys the protection of a Special Providence has aroused a virulent hatred in the breast of the other. In the history of Britain, no less than in the history of Israel, the workings of a special Providence are to be seen, and, as of old, it has roused the enmity and jealousy of less favoured rivals.

It is significant, too, that to accomplish the ambition of crushing Britain, Germany has deserted Christ and reverted to the old gods of the Assyrians. The doctrines of Nietzsche, Treitschke and Bernhardi, whose writings have displaced the Bible to all practical intents and purposes in modern Germany, are the doctrines of Baal, the old god of blood and fire and frightfulness.

There is now the question whether this similarity between Israel and Assyria, on the one hand, and Britain and Germany on the other, is a mere coincidence or the fulfilment of prophecy.

In the tenth chapter of Isaiah there occurs the following passage : " Wherefore it shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the glory of my hand I have done it and by my wisdom ; for I am prudent. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith ? "

At the present moment there is no more intensely interesting passage in the Scriptures than this. It indicates plainly that the Assyrians are to be punished for boastfully asserting that their victory over Israel was due solely to their own prowess, and not to the fact that God was using them as a rod wherewith to punish His rebellious children of Israel. The extent and completeness of the punishment to be meted out to them is indicated by Isa. xiv. 25 : " I will break the Assyrian, and tread him underfoot." The passage also informs us when that punishment will be effected, namely, when God has performed His whole work upon Mount Zion. That obviously means at the end of the Times of the Gentiles, a time which we have reason to believe is exceedingly close to the present day. It has been suggested that this prophecy was fulfilled in the fall of the Assyrian power many centuries ago, and that the " work " referred to means only the punishment of Israel some seven centuries before Christ. But in that case the emphatic word " whole " would seem to be unnecessary, and God does not use needless words in His communications through the prophets.

On the other hand, it is an undoubted fact that the fall of the Assyrian Empire was a terrible calamity, commensurate with the words of the subsequent prophecy. The Assyrians in the time of their power were so hard and pitiless to the nations which they

conquered that they received very little mercy from the people of those nations when the latter found their oppressors weakened and decayed. But it is certain, from other prophecies, that Assyria is to continue to be a thorn in the side of Israel down to the end of time. Thus, the tenth and eleventh verses of the tenth chapter of Zechariah refer to the promised return of Israel to Palestine, the "sign of the times," which is in course of realisation at the present day. And there we are told that "Israel shall pass through the sea with affliction" because of the Assyrians. In other words, the Assyrians are to develop into a maritime power, and with their warships obstruct the return of Israel.

Again, it is obvious, from the fifth chapter of Micah, that the Assyrians are to threaten Israel some time after the coming of the Messiah, and that on this occasion God will help the Israelites to defeat them and to carry out a successful invasion of the Assyrian territories.

These last two prophecies make it clear that Israel's old enemies are to exist down to the end of the dispensation, just as the Israelites themselves are to continue. May not the prophecy of Isaiah refer to two calamities for the Assyrians, each a punishment for their sin of boastfulness ?

In Isaiah's description of the Assyrian king's boasting that his prowess is of more account than the power of God, we have a remarkably vivid pen-picture of the present Kaiser. Has he not challenged God in his tearing up of treaties, in the ravages of his mighty army and in descending on the peoples of the earth "like a wolf of the fold" ? Is not his faith wholly in material power ? Has he not proclaimed himself greater than God in the words, "There is only one law—my law, the law which I lay down"; and "There is only one master in this country ; I am he,

and I will tolerate no other " ? His are the deeds and words of a true king of Assyria.

The deduction to be drawn from these considerations is obvious. The prophets have said that Assyria is to continue until the end of time, even as Israel is to continue. The Assyrians are always to be a plague to the Israelites, and they will retain their national characteristics through the ages ; they will be a great military people, cruel and relentless to those who fall before their might, and their kings shall be infidel kings who boast that they are greater than God Himself. There is only one people in the world to-day who fulfil these requirements to the very letter, and that people is the nation which is known to us as the Germans.

CHAPTER XI

THE PROPHETS AND THE WAR

IF we admit these theories that Britain represents the ten lost tribes of Israel, that the Germans are the modern descendants of the ancient Assyrians, and that the various other peoples mentioned by the prophets are existing to-day, though under different names, then it is possible to give some account of the present war, its course, end, and results, by reference to the Scriptures.

One thing is certain, God knew that this war was to take place. We have only to consider the innumerable opportunities which Providence has had of preventing the conflict, to realise how terribly true that statement is. If the Kaiser had died last July, if Nietzsche had not lived to write his works, if the Kaiser had been advised by men of honour instead of by unscrupulous schemers, if some great storm or other natural phenomenon had destroyed the German plans, as they have so often upset the carefully laid calculations of Britain's enemies, and if a million other ordinary happenings had taken place, the war could not have been. Consider how easily any of these things might have happened, consider with what minute care all the material which was to burst into flame at the end of last July has been carefully accumulated and prepared during the last hundred years, nay, during the whole period over which the history of man extends. This war is no haphazard occur-

rence. It has been preordained. It must have some definite purpose. Put the war down to chance, and it becomes meaningless ; it is simply a particularly foolish case of suicide on the part of some millions of men. Put it down to God, and study the Scriptures, and immediately it is seen that the war is necessary, and that its results will more than outweigh the suffering it has entailed.

Isaiah tells us that the purpose of God in bringing about this war is twofold. In the first place, He is punishing the Assyrians for boasting that their military might is greater than His word. "I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom" (Isa. x. 12, 13). In the second place, the war is a punishment visited on Israel because of its inveterate sin of deserting the true religion that has been revealed. "Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly . . . now, therefore, behold the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory" (Isa. viii. 6, 7). The nineteenth verse of the same chapter is a reference to the form of idolatry which will become popular in Israel during these latter days : "They shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter." It is unnecessary to point out how that prophecy has been fulfilled. For years past there has been a steady increase of popular interest in spiritualism, crystal-gazing, clairvoyancy, and numerous other forms of necromancy.

From the thirty-sixth chapter of Isaiah we learn that, before the war breaks out, the Germans make an attempt to corrupt Britain, so that she will refuse to fight at first, although all the time the plans of the

Germans are carefully laid for the destruction of Britain. The chapter describes how Rabshakeh, the emissary of Sennacherib, attempts to persuade the Israelites to give pledges that they will not aid their allies. Again, there is no need to point out that this is what actually happened a few months ago.

The early German successes which enabled them to trample over Belgium and to reach almost to the gates of Paris, and the subsequent failure of the Kaiser's generals to make any further headway, are referred to by Isaiah when he says: "Be not afraid of the Assyrian; he shall smite thee with a rod. . . . For yet a little while, and the indignation shall cease. . . . And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him."

From Mic. v. 5 we learn that the modern Assyrians are to be opposed by "seven shepherds and eight principal men." A king or ruler is not unlike a shepherd in that he has to watch over a flock. Hence, the shepherds are the rulers of the nations opposing the Assyrians. Micah mentions seven, but at the moment of writing there are only six in the field: Britain, France, Russia, Belgium, Serbia, and Japan. It seems, however, that it is only a question of time before Rumania throws in her lot with the Allies, and then the seven will be complete. As to the eight principal men, they are obviously the military leaders of the nations opposing the Assyrians: Lord Kitchener, General Joffre, the Grand-Duke Nicholas, and the others. But there are eight principal men and only seven nations. This is explained by the fact that the war will be partly a naval war, and one of the nations will be predominant on the sea as well as play an important part in the warfare on land. It will have two principal men, one military and the other naval. This rôle is actually being played by Britain to-day, and so we may come to the conclusion

that Mr. Winston Churchill is the eighth principal man of the prophecy.

Students of the books of Daniel and Isaiah know that the "ships of Chittim" and "the ships of Tarshish" are to play an important part in the events of the last days. The prophets declare that these ships are to be instrumental in effecting the return of Israel to the land of his forefathers. Tarshish was what we now call Gibraltar. It was a great port in the days of the Old Testament, and served as a clearing-house for the produce of western Europe and northern Africa. From it Solomon obtained gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. Chittim was an island on the route from Tarshish to Tyre; it was famed for its boxwood, and is known to us to-day as Cyprus. Both Gibraltar and Cyprus are British possessions, and so it may be assumed that by the ships of the two ports the British Navy is meant in these last days. Moreover, in the old days the words Tarshish and Chittim became proverbial expressions signifying mercantile greatness, and, as Britain is the greatest mercantile nation of to-day, and occupies the same position in the world's trade as formerly did Tarshish and Chittim, so it becomes plain that the ships are those of the greatest mercantile nation of the latter days, and not the actual ships belonging to the original inhabitants of Gibraltar and Cyprus.

In that case, it is clear that the British Navy will cause great havoc among the Germans, for in Num. xxiv. 24 we read: "Ships shall come from Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur and shall afflict Eber, and he shall perish for ever." "Eber" doubtless refers to Germany's ally, Turkey, and at the moment of writing it appears probable that Britain's warships will not only afflict Turkey by forcing the Dardanelles, but, as a result of that action, will bring about the final fall of Turkish power in Europe.

In the Old Testament frequent mention is made of a people known as Edom, who were the descendants of Esau. There is no nation of that name to-day, but Ezekiel gives the key to their modern identity, for he expressly states that they are to obtain possession of Palestine and will lay the land desolate and will rejoice in its desolation. Obviously the reference is again to Turkey. The Book of Obadiah, with its one short chapter, is given over wholly to the fate of Edom at the hands of Jacob. "And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph shall be a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it." Again, "There is Edom, her kings and all her princes, which with their might are laid by them that were slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down in the pit" (Ezek. xxxii. 29). This last prophecy may be taken as predicting that the Edomites, or Turks, will ally themselves with the infidels "that go down to the pit," and as a result will suffer a crushing defeat, which will deprive them of their national existence. And we know that the Turks are allied with the modern infidels, the children of the new Baal.

In these days of aeroplanes and Zeppelins the following words of Isaiah concerning the struggle between the Israelites and the Assyrians have a peculiar appropriateness: "He shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel." In another place the prophet says: "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem." From the former prophecy it would appear that Britain is to be afflicted with

many air-raids ; and the second indicates that she will, none the less, hold her own in this aerial warfare. Another passage which may be taken as a reference to aeroplanes is to be found in Ezek. i. 19-24. " When the living creatures went, the wheels went by them ; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go : and the wheels were lifted up over against them ; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. . . . And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other ; every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies. And when they went I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host ; when they stood they let down their wings." When it is considered that the prophets of old often could not understand the prophecies which they made, but simply recorded such visions and words as the Lord gave them, the above is a remarkably true description of the modern biplane. Knowing nothing of aeroplanes, the prophet assumed that the noise of the motor was due to the wings. Moreover, he did not realise that the wings are not actually let down, but only seem to be let down when a biplane comes to earth.

In the second Book of Kings there is a passage which may be taken as referring to the duration of the war : " Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth from the same ; and in the third year sow ye and reap, and plant vineyards and eat the fruits thereof " (xix. 29). The fact that the new British army has been recruited on the basis of service of " three years, or the duration of the war," indicates

that there is a general disposition, among those who have the best opportunity of judging, to regard the probable duration of the war as about three years, the time mentioned in the prophecy.

The question whether these prophecies refer to the present war will be settled if in the course of the conflict the German armies are stricken with a terrible and noisome plague, probably lupus, which will destroy them by thousands and hundreds of thousands. Zechariah is most definite on the point. "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations . . . in that day there shall be one Lord . . . Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand on their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth" (Zech. xiv. 2-12). Similarly, Isaiah speaks of 185,000 Assyrians being killed off in one day, but he does not indicate the cause. It is certain that, as a result of the enforced "sedentary" warfare of the winter months, there is a grave danger of some such pestilence breaking out. The Germans have allowed thousands of their dead to lie where they have fallen, and tens of thousands have been buried less than a foot below the surface of the ground.

In view of the Germans' avowed ambition to invade England and to capture London, it is interesting to see whether there is any indication in the Scriptures that that ambition will be realised. Just as Jerusalem was the capital and heart of the ancient kingdom of Israel, so is London the capital and heart of the British Empire, or the modern kingdom of Israel. Hence in the prophecies London will be referred to as Jerusalem, or else simply as the "city." In the Book of Isaiah we find the following definite

statements : " He shall not come into the city " ; and " By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it for Mine own sake and for My servant David's sake." In the latter prophecy the reference to King David may be an indication that there is truth in the assertion that the blood of the royal house of Israel flows in the veins of the King of England. In the thirty-eighth chapter Isaiah again predicts that the city will not be captured. " I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria ; and I will defend the city." The second Book of Kings is equally plain on this question. " Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord." It will be noticed how in both passages it is prophesied that the Assyrians shall be forced to retreat over the same ground over which they have previously advanced.

On the other hand, the prophets are equally clear that Germany will be invaded by the forces of the Allies. Micah, for instance, says : " And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof."

Indeed, it is with no uncertain note that the Bible proclaims that Germany is to be not only defeated but completely overthrown. " The Lord of hosts hath sworn That I will break the Assyrian in My land, and upon My mountains tread him underfoot ; then shall the yoke depart from off them and his burden depart from off their shoulders " (Isa. xiv. 24, 25). This passage opens up the vista of the future, when Israel shall have expiated its sins and

become once more, after its centuries of wandering among the Gentiles, the acknowledged people of the Lord.

But, although final victory is certain, it is also predicted that the triumph will be dearly won. Those of the allied nations which have followed Babylon—held by many to represent the Roman Church—will in particular suffer heavy losses. Esdras, for instance, says: “Fire and hail and flying swords and many waters, that all fields may be full, and all rivers with the abundance of great waters. And they shall break down the cities and walls, mountains and hills, trees of wood and grass of the meadows and their corn. And they shall go steadfastly unto Babylon and make her afraid. They shall come to her, and besiege her, the star, and all wrath shall they pour out upon her: then shall the dust and the smoke go up unto the heaven, and all they that be about her shall bewail her. And they that remain under her shall do service unto them that have put her in fear. . . . Thou hast followed her that is hated in all her works and inventions, therefore, saith God, I will send plagues upon thee; widowhood, poverty, famine, sword, and pestilence, to lay waste thy houses with destruction and death.” It is a remarkable fact that Belgium and France, the only two nations among the Allies over whom the Roman Church has any sway, are the two countries which have suffered most from the war. The words of the prophet are nothing less than a vivid description of what has happened in Belgium and Northern France during the past few months.

The problem of what is to happen to the Kaiser when the war is over has already been debated in the columns of our newspapers. Certainly some expiation will be required of the man of whom the prophet Esdras said: “Thou hast afflicted the meek, thou hast hurt the peaceable, thou hast loved liars,

and destroyed the dwellings of them that brought forth fruit, and hast cast down the walls of such as did thee no harm." Isaiah describes the fate of the Assyrian king in these words : " Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words thou hast heard, where-with the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour and return to his own land ; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land " (Isa. xxxvii. 6, 7). Again, " Then shall the Assyrian fall by the sword, not of a mighty man ; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him : but he shall flee from the sword " (Isa. xxxi. 8). From this last it appears that the Kaiser will suffer a rather ignominious end.

Esdras goes so far as to prophesy the fates of the three kings of Germany, Austria, and Turkey. " In his last days shall the Most High raise up three kingdoms and renew many things therein . . . one of them shall die upon his bed, and yet with pain. For the two that remain shall be slain with the sword. For the sword of the one shall devour the other ; but at last shall he fall through the sword himself."

" Asshur is there, and all her company : his graves are about him : all of them slain, fallen by the sword : whose graves are set in the side of the pit, and her company is round about her grave : all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living " (Ezek. xxxii. 22, 23).

But the greatest result of the war will be that " the remnant of Israel shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth " (Isa. x. 20).

CHAPTER XII

BRITAIN AND TYRE

MAN's most characteristic sin ever since he has existed on the earth has been infidelity to God. Throughout all the ages man has constantly fallen away from the behests of the Almighty. "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, There is no fear of God in their eyes," says the Psalmist. We have only to consider the history of the chosen people to realise how deeply ingrained is this sin. Here was a people enjoying direct communion with God, enjoying His favours and protection, and blessed with many promises of future glory. And yet they could not remain faithful for one whole generation. In spite of continual warning and punishment, they persistently went "awhoring after other gods," and bowed down before images of brass and stone. Only when dire punishments opened their eyes to the extent of their foolishness and sin did they repent and return to God. In His infinite patience and mercy He forgave them again and again, and delivered them from their oppressors. But on every occasion their repentance was short-lived, and they reverted to their old and sinful ways, with the result that further punishments were inflicted on them.

There were always false prophets to cry, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." "Behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you

assured peace in this place. Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in My name, Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in My name, and I sent them not, yet they say sword and famine shall not be in this land : by sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed " (Jer. xiv. 13-15).

The people were ever more ready to listen to these false prophets than to the true. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means ; and My people love to have it so " (Jer. v. 31). "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord : which say to seers, See not : and to prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits " (Isa. xxx. 9, 10).

Yet this was the people to whose king God had promised that "I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place and be moved no more ; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them as at the first from the days when I appointed judges over My people Israel ; and I will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies " (2 Sam. vii. 10, 11, R.V.). So long as the Israelites remained faithful that promise was kept to the letter. Israel defeated all her enemies, and rose to a glorious position among the nations. But the Israelites forgot the dread warnings as to the results of disobedience : "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies ; thou shalt go out one way against them and shall flee seven ways before them, ye shall be slain before your enemies . . . they that hate you shall reign over you."

As a result of their wilful disobedience the people who had been promised the special favour of God and who, under David and Solomon, had attained such glorious prosperity, were reduced by war and famine,

the punishments for their sins, to such an extent that the Assyrians took only 27,000 families of Israel into captivity and the Babylonians only 4,000 families of the house of Judah.

The same wilful blindness is apparent in the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews. Warned by the experiences of their forefathers, they carefully avoided any semblance of idolatry. But spiritually they were dead. They were drunk with pride and hypocrisy, and were blind to their own faults and to the truth. As Christ said of them, they had ejected one evil spirit only to make room for seven other spirits more evil than the first. "The last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

History tells us how terribly significant were the words of the rejected Messiah. From the fall of Jerusalem down to the present day the house of Judah has suffered greater punishments and worse desolations than any which befell their forefathers.

Britain has a lesson to draw from the terrible story of the Jews. Ever since the days when Britain threw aside the idolatries of Rome and adopted the religion of God's Word she has prospered exceedingly, just as the Israelites prospered under David and Solomon. Britain has triumphed over all her enemies, she has lent to all and borrowed from none, she has been the head and not the tail.

But what of these latter days ? Can it be said of her that she is free of the sin of idolatry ? Does she not still hanker after the old heathen gods ? And is she free of the sins which caused the downfall of the Jews, the sins which Christ characterised as the seven evil spirits which were worse than the first ?

We have seen that there is abundant evidence that we are fast approaching the end of the dispensation. But among the "signs of the times" which

have not been fully noticed is that mentioned in the second epistle to the Thessalonians. "That day shall not come except there come a falling away first."

It is apparent that there has been a falling away of late years among the British. The Bible is the foundation of Britain's liberties and prosperity, and yet faith in the Book which she has translated into every known living tongue and distributed among every known people on the face of the earth is fast disappearing from Britain. There are millions who never give religion a thought, who know little and care nothing for the Word of God. And there is a multitude of so-called believers whose faith is more lukewarm than that of Laodicea. Little better than agnostics, they reject most of the Old and much of the New Testaments. Everything that does not agree with their own prejudices and inclinations, anything that does not happen to be palatable, they cast adrift and attempt to explain away as unworthy of consideration in such an "enlightened" age. Like the Israelites of old, they prefer smooth things to the truth, and clamour for deceits. Many of them, doubtless, are honest in their intentions and are animated in the first instance by the desire to avoid the sin of superstition. But their excessive zeal in hunting down one evil spirit only leaves them an easy prey for the worse spirit of unbelief. Much of the present indifference to religion is due to the efforts of these meddlers with God's Word. The average man realises how little is the faith of these so-called ministers of God; he hears the mass of contradictions and inconsistencies which they preach, and he turns from them in disgust.

This turning away from the churches is not in itself a bad sign. Religion is not to be estimated by mere church attendance; Christianity is a vital, personal religion, not a dull collection of empty

formulæ and observances. The man who thinks for himself may be, and often is, a far better Christian than the most diligent of church-goers. One of the most encouraging features of recent years has been the way in which the ordinary man has taken to studying the Bible for himself and refused to accept second-hand opinions. But there are many who still confound the Church with the churches, the divine with the human. Because church or chapel does not attract them, they think that Christ has no message for them, and ignore the Word of God.

And there is the ever-growing movement which aims, either tacitly or openly, for the reintroduction of the superstitions and idolatries of the dark days before Britain was great. Like the Israelites, many amongst us are not satisfied with the religion under which their forefathers waxed mighty, and, instead of devoting their energies to keeping that religion pure and holy, they must needs hanker after the old gods, the worship of which led only to affliction and desolation. Truly the wilful and blind foolishness of man is amazing. He can never let well alone, but in his arrogance and ignorance must be for ever tampering with the things of proved worth.

Man does not act so foolishly in his worldly life. If, under one system of business, a man earned no more than a bare living, and if under another he rose to fabulous wealth, would he revert to the old system in the midst of his prosperity and after he had proved the worth of the new ? There is not a man outside the lunatic asylums who would think of doing such a thing. Obvious common sense tells him to cling to the new system under which he has prospered. If a man were so mad as to revert to the former system, everybody would agree that he was asking for trouble, which indeed would in all probability be visited upon him. And yet in our spiritual life men are always

urging us to return to the old system under which a bare existence was our lot, and to scatter to the winds the glorious heritage that our forefathers have built up for us and our children. And, what is stranger still, such men always obtain a sympathetic hearing.

The religion of Christ is not an easy religion ; many of its demands are opposed to the natural inclinations of man. "The carnal mind is at enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be" (Rom. viii. 7). Hence the avidity with which the false prophets who prophesy smooth things are listened to, and the attention and popularity received by those preachers who appeal to the sentiments of their listeners, and tell us that because God is the God of love He is a weak, soft-hearted creature who would not really destroy the Canaanites or visit upon the world to-day the terrors predicted in the Book of Revelation ; and who explain away the Word of the God of Justice by saying that the Bible was written many years ago, and for a crude, savage people who could only be impressed by the use of strong and exaggerated language.

Once admit that "the natural man, to whom the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness," has the right to reject any portion of the Scriptures which does not happen to be in strict accordance with his fads and fancies, and the whole Bible goes. He begins with the Old Testament, passes on to the apostles, and finally criticises the words of Christ. The result is that the Bible is reduced to a few inoffensive moral maxims, such as may be found in a child's copybook. Such was the religion of the Pharisees.

The falling away is as evident among the churches as among the people. On the one hand, we have High Churchmen agitating for reunion with Rome, and on the other Nonconformist ministers denying that Christ

was divine. These are not the things on which Britain built up her greatness. It was the sturdy Puritan spirit that relied on the whole Bible and a pure conscience that made Britain what she is. God was a reality to Cromwell and his Ironsides, but He is non-existent for the vast majority of Britons to-day, and, to many of those who still nominally believe, He is not the true God. Remember the Israelites, and consider how the continuance of God's protection and favour was conditional. "If they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them." Is Britain taking heed to do all that God has commanded?

The immediate effect of unbelief is and always has been to produce a spirit of revolution. Unbelief removes the fear of God and looses moral restraint; it is the deadly atmosphere which turns human nature into a pestilential swamp of envy, hatred, malice, and all the other baser passions. Unbelief paved the way for the horrors of the French Revolution, and so it has always been the case since the fall of man. The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses and Aaron was typical of all revolutions; they all have sprung from unbelief.

Within the last ten years the growth of the revolutionary spirit has been remarkably rapid in Britain. True, that spirit is more or less quiescent at the present moment as a result of the outbreak of war, but none dare say that the days of long and bitter strikes, of suffragist outrages, civil war, and the preaching of red rebellion in the principal squares of London have departed for ever. The old hates and envies have been dulled for a time by a sudden and great danger, but there is no reason for believing that the passing of that danger will not be a sign for the recrudescence of the spirit of revolt.

It is worthy of note that, among the supporters of one or another of the various revolutionary move-

ments are ministers of God, and in particular those ministers who are in favour of reverting to the old superstitions and those whose faith is so lukewarm that they cannot accept the Word of the Lord. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rom. xiii. 1, 2). "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. ii. 13-15). Have not these two passages from the Scriptures any significance in the modern world, or have not these revolutionary ministers studied their Bibles sufficiently to have met these words? Are not they and the preachers, both secular and religious, who proclaim false doctrine the very people whom Peter described as full of slander and railing accusation, presumptuous, self-willed, and not afraid to speak evil of dignities?

This wave of unbelief and revolt, so noticeable in Britain and the rest of the world to-day, was foretold some nineteen centuries ago as a sign that the world has reached the dawn of the "great and terrible day of the Lord." We may soon expect the great earthquake which, so the Apocalypse tells us, will overturn the existing order of things.

Before the Great Day the falling away is to reach a climax in the death of the Two Witnesses. These may be taken as referring to the Two Testaments, which have been the recognised witnesses to God's omnipotence ever since the days when they were written. The witnesses are described as the source

and fountain of all spiritual light, words which can only apply to the Scriptures. The death of the witnesses, therefore, means that the authority and inspiration of the Bible will be denied. Their death is to be accompanied by a general rejoicing among the peoples, who by denying the divine authority of the Bible are freed from the fear of the threatened judgments which previously tormented their consciences.

This is what is actually happening before our eyes in the world to-day. People are denying the divine authority of the Bible, they are telling themselves that the terrible judgments which are foretold therein will not really happen, and are congratulating themselves on being free of a number of disturbing doctrines and on living in such an "enlightened" age.

Among the nations of the Continent the Bible is already practically dead, and it is only in Britain where it can be described as a living book. It is in Britain, therefore, that the death of the witnesses will take place, for Britain is the last country which has given them shelter. But, as we have already seen, the end of the influence of the Bible is approaching fast.

The death of the witnesses will be due to the "Beast which ascendeth out of the abyss." The Beast represents the Roman Empire, pagan and papal. The thirteenth chapter of Revelation shows how the Beast succeeded to the "power, seat, and authority of the pagan emperors." It must, therefore, represent the Papacy. The woman supported by the Beast obviously represents the Church of Rome, which no longer wields any power over the nations, and, although supported by them, is nevertheless hated by them because she has stripped them of their wealth and resources. The description is complete in every respect.

These are the nations who are to kill the witnesses. It is to be remarked what great progress has been made of late years towards reunion with Rome. The modern spirit of false liberalism, the main characteristic of which is the mental stagnation which prefers peace to truth, has pandered to this movement, with the result that it has spread not only among the people but has gained ground among the nation's rulers. Those who protested against the recent official mission to the Pope were denounced as intolerant and out of date. They were told that it was people such as they who were doing disservice to Christ by robbing the glorious truths which He preached of the strength which lies in unity. Events will prove how far these people who followed in the footsteps of their Puritan forefathers and proclaimed that which their conscience told them to be true, were wrong in holding that the Pope is the Beast and that the Church of Rome is the Woman whom the Beast upholds.

If they were right, then the fact that Britain is supporting the Woman, as the other nations have done, will lead to Britain killing the witnesses, and Britain will accompany the other nations and the Beast when they go down into perdition.

Again, the spirit of revolt against human and divine authority is the preparation for the dominion of the final Antichrist. He it is who is to "make war against the Lamb" and of whom the prophet Daniel speaks when he refers to him who "exalts himself and magnifies himself above every god, and speaks marvellous things against the God of gods." All people shall bow down before him, whose names are not "written in the Lamb's book of Life."

Of course, this unbelief will not be absolutely universal. There will remain a small band of true Christians, insignificant in point of numbers, but great

in devotion, who will endure in truth in spite of hatred and persecution. We see the process of separating the tares from the wheat going on before our eyes. Those who are full of false faith and false righteousness are rapidly becoming more and more distinct from the truly faithful. They will be ready, when the time of trial comes, to go over and join the mighty hosts of the Antichrist.

The revolt against God will be open and avowed. "The kings of the earth are to set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Christ, saying, Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us" (Psa. ii. 2, 3). We are rapidly approaching the time when those words will receive their fulfilment in the formal rejection of the Bible and the casting away of the restraint exercised by its warnings and commands. It may be objected that the prophecy had its fulfilment in the days of the apostles. That fulfilment was only partial. By referring to the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation it becomes plain that the complete fulfilment of the words is not to take place until the events foretold in the prophecy of the sixth vial. Moreover, we are told that the three spirits of evil are "to go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the great war against God Almighty." These three spirits are likened to frogs, animals which are hidden by day but which issue forth and are clamorous by night. These are the characteristics of the modern promoters of Superstition, Atheism, and Lawlessness, which are usually held to be the spirits signified by the frogs.

What is to be the fate of Britain in the terrible events which are to follow? The Bible is most clear upon the subject. The true people of God, all those who are "counted to be worthy to escape those

things which are to come to pass," are to be taken from the earth. On the other hand, the Lord will come out "of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and to destroy them which destroy or corrupt the earth."

As Britain is to be the last stronghold of the two witnesses, it is reasonable to conclude that the greater number of the remaining true believers will be found in that country. But what of the rest of the nation?

They will be a people which has known and rejected the truth, they will have enjoyed all the glorious advantages to be derived from an open Bible for over three centuries. Does not justice demand that their fate shall be commensurate with the advantages they have enjoyed?

The people of Tyre were a people like those of modern Britain. They were "situate at the entry of the sea," and their merchants were "princes," and their "traffickers the honourable of the earth." It was said of Tyre that "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou art the anointed cherub which covereth, and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God. Thou wast perfect in thy ways, from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." The strength of Tyre was in her ships, just as is the case with Britain to-day.

In the fate of Tyre, therefore, we may find some indication of the probable fate of Britain. The judgments which were visited upon Israel and the other peoples of old because of their sins are but warnings to the modern peoples to keep themselves free from those sins. If they fall into sin, as Israel fell, then will expiation be demanded of them.

The sin for which Tyre suffered was the same as that for which Israel suffered—idolatry. In the days when the two nations were friendly and Hiram

ruled over Tyre and David occupied the throne of Israel the people of Tyre were worshippers of Jehovah. But their friendship with the Israelites was the cause of their downfall. They followed the example of the Israelites and fell into the sin of idolatry, and for this they were punished. In speaking of their apostasy Isaiah says: "It shall come to pass, in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years Tyre shall sing as a harlot . . . and it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years . . . she shall turn to her hire and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth" (Isa. xxiii. 15-17).

Harlotry and fornication are the Scriptural symbols for idolatry, and the prophecy indicates that, seventy years after the birth of one of her kings, Tyre will openly unite with the other nations of the world in the worship of false gods. Now the falling away of the British nation may be said to have begun with the Tractarian Movement of 1843, which date is exactly seventy years after the birth of King George IV. May we say, then, that Isaiah was not only speaking of ancient Tyre but also of modern Britain?

The destruction of Tyre was foretold by Ezekiel: "Thus saith the Lord God, behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her and make her like the top of a rock. . . . They shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water. . . . I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more, though thou be sought for yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xxvi. 3, 4, 12, 20).

Three centuries later that prophecy was fulfilled

to the letter by Alexander the Great. Ancient Tyre consisted of two cities, the old and the new. The former stood on the mainland and the latter on an island opposite, about half a mile from the shore. Alexander captured the old city and immediately lay siege to the new. Not being able to reach the walls of the town with his siege engines, he had the old city pulled down and threw the stones, timber, rubbish, and everything else he could find into the channel, and thus formed a causeway to the new city. Of old Tyre to-day there is not a trace, not even a rubbish heap, and a tiny fishing village stands on the site of the new city.

In view of the utter and terrible completeness with which prophecy was fulfilled in regard to Tyre how can Britain, who has enjoyed advantages and favours even greater than those accorded to Tyre, hope to avoid an equally dire fate ?

Whenever the Almighty decrees the destruction of a nation it is effected by the sword of other nations ; that is a commonplace of prophecy. At the present moment Britain is at war with the strongest military power of the modern world, which has for years been preparing for the colossal conflict. If Britain is to reap as she has sown, how can she hope to escape from the sword of this mighty people, which, infidel though it may be, may nevertheless be the instrument of divine judgment ?

We may say that Germany is infidel ; so were the Greeks, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians. We may urge that it is a war of aggression on Germany's part ; so were the wars of the Greeks, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians. Right is greater than might only when God wills that it should be. Can Britain say with certainty that the righteousness of her present cause outweighs the sin of her past ?

CHAPTER XIII

REVELATION AND THE FUTURE OF BRITAIN

IN the previous chapter it was shown that Britain has sinned and deserves chastisement, which the God of Justice will doubtless inflict on her. It was also shown that Britain bears a striking resemblance to ancient Tyre, the nation which in the ancient world held much the same position as that which is held in the modern world by "the mistress of the seas." Tyre was destroyed utterly for her sin of idolatry, hence it seemed reasonable to assume that Britain would, in turn, suffer the same fate because of her sin of idolatry, in which term is included not merely the worship of idols, but all variance from the true religion of God. Britain's sin is not less than that of Tyre, because the modern people have enjoyed greater revelation of the truth and have received greater blessings than the ancient Tyrians.

But although judgment will doubtless fall, and is indeed falling upon the nation at the present moment, yet will the nation be overwhelmed, as was Tyre? Is there any reason for hoping that the judgment will take the form of chastisement and not of complete destruction?

There is only one theory which admits the possibility of Britain avoiding destruction at the hands of some foreign Power such as Germany, and that theory is that the British are the descendants of the ten tribes which were lost. In that case Britain will be able to

say with the Psalmist: "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death." That is certain because in the old days God made definite promises to the forefathers of the Israelites, which He will most surely fulfil, but which He has not yet been able to fulfil because of the persistent sin and disobedience of the chosen people. Time after time God warned the Israelites that if they were to forsake Him, then He would forsake them, and would allow them to be slain before their enemies, and to fall under the yoke of those who hated them. Those warnings, which so often have received a terrible fulfilment, apply with no less force to the modern as to the ancient Israelites. If they do not pluck out the stubbornness of their hearts, then the God who delivered their forefathers into the power of the Assyrians can deliver the present generation into the power of the modern Assyrians. The prophecies, too, insist on the fact that when Israel, for her sins, was allowed to be conquered she was not to fall into the hands of those who were mild and merciful, but of those who hated her. To realise the awfulness of the judgments which were visited upon Israel at the hands of the Assyrians and her other oppressors, we have only to consider what would happen to-day if the Germans were to find England at their mercy. If God has decreed that Britain should fall under the iron heel of Germany, then indeed will history repeat itself; the ravishing of Belgium will be as nothing to the ravishing of Britain, for the full venom of German hatred is reserved for her hereditary enemy—England.

We know, however, that ten righteous men would have saved Sodom; and we also know that there are in Britain many who are still true Christians, in spite of the falling away of their brethren. We may expect, then, that for the sake of these men

the full force of the avenging judgment will be modified.

In this connection it is interesting to recall the prophecy of Jacob, as recorded in the forty-ninth chapter of the Book of Genesis. After saying that Joseph shall have a multitudinous seed which shall form a nation and a company of nations, and shall increase like a fruitful bough the branches of which run over the wall, the patriarch adds: "The archers have sorely grieved and shot at and hated him."

These words apply with striking force to Britain during these latter years. We have only to remember the Boer War, which was the sign for an outburst of virulent Anglophobia all over the Continent, and to consider the vast amount of money and blood which the conqueror of Napoleon had to expend over the process of muddling through the work of subduing a handful of Dutch farmers. We have only to remember a tithe of the innumerable incidents, both at home and abroad, which have not ceased to plague John Bull ever since, to realise that the archers have indeed grieved him sorely. And now, as the culmination of his worries, he has been forced to fight for his existence.

During all the years that these worries have continued the falling away of the British people has proceeded at a great rate. The people were blind to the warnings of God. Hence the necessity of the war to open their eyes to the extent of their sins. Can it be said that the nation has really seen the error of its ways? It is indeed true that the war has caused a quickening of popular interest in religion. There is still much to be desired, but there are not a few hopeful signs. People are more inclined to turn to the God of their forefathers. The churches and chapels are better attended, frivolity and sinful extravagance do not stalk so flamboyantly through

the land as they did a few months ago, the Sabbath is no longer desecrated to such an extent, and the voices of many of the false prophets are for the moment stilled. When, at length, the nation really turns again to God then will the words of the patriarch be fulfilled: "But his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob—even by the God of thy fathers, who shall help thee."

But does Britain repent? Does she even realise the extent of her sinfulness? It will be useless for her to return to the wrong God for help. To turn from agnosticism to the idolatry of materialism will be of no avail whatever. Britain must turn to the true God, the God who has made her mighty, if she is to save herself from the dread judgment with which she is threatened. There are but very few signs that this is realised. Because politicians have for a time laid aside their differences it has been suggested that the Churches should also lay aside theirs, and should stand shoulder to shoulder in this crisis. So indeed they should, so long as only the British Churches, that is to say, the Protestant Churches which have helped to build up the nation's greatness are included in the term Churches. But these Churches cannot unite with Rome even temporarily without denying the divine inspiration of the Bible, and casting away, for the sake of a word, the birthright which our Puritan forefathers laid down their lives to obtain. Either Rome or Protestantism represents the true religion of Christ; both cannot, for they are as opposed as summer to winter, as life to death. Britain has had ample proof accorded her in the past that Protestantism is the true religion; therefore, now in her time of tribulation let her turn to the religion the worth of which she has proved.

Unfortunately, in this matter Britain is but ill-

served by many of her so-called ministers of God. For years past they have been pandering to human pride and presumption, and in their efforts "to bring the Bible up-to-date" they have explained away this and that portion of the Word of God until finally they themselves have come to believe that the Book is nothing more than a collection of pious writings composed by a number of uneducated and often misguided men who lived long before man had become the very superior person that he is to-day. To such men as these, who to all practical intents and purposes deny the divine inspiration of the Bible, the differences between Rome and Protestantism are mere matters of detail, of no real significance. They view with complacence the prospect of reunion with Rome, and forget the words of Cardinal Manning: "The purpose of Rome is to subjugate and subdue, to bend or break the British race."

Such is the tragedy which is being enacted before our eyes. We see a conscience-stricken people turning to God in the hour of their tribulation, and we see them turning, in their ignorance, to these false prophets and teachers, these men of lukewarm faith who cannot give them the light and leading that they seek.

Luckily there are still some pulpits in the land from which the true religion is preached, and it may be that the influence of these may be strong enough to avert the worst terrors of the threatened judgment. One thing is certain: sooner or later there will be a marvellous revival of the true religion in Britain. In the same place where the two witnesses are put to death, they will arise again after a period of three and a half years, to the fear and consternation of their enemies (Rev. xi. 11). As has already been shown, Britain is the only place where the faith in the Bible can be extinguished, which is signified by the death

of the witnesses. Therefore it will be in Britain that faith will rise again.

This great event is to be accompanied by a tremendous earthquake or revolution, which will result in the fall of the tenth part of the city. The city referred to is "the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," and is called "Babylon the Great." It is usually regarded as signifying the idolatrous Churches of Christendom, the central seat of their power being the seven-hilled city of Rome. It will include all who, by following the false religions taught by those Churches, can claim to be its citizens. The fall of a tenth part, therefore, represents that at the time of the resurrection of the two witnesses a tenth of those sunk in idolatry will see the error of their ways and will be reconverted to the true religion of the Bible.

It is reasonable to expect that this tenth part which separates from Rome, as the result of the revolution consequent upon the resurrection of the witnesses, represents Britain, which will have more or less formally joined Rome after the flood of false doctrine which she has imbibed during the period of her falling away. As Britain was the first to welcome the Bible, and in the past has ever been foremost in the task of spreading the Word over the face of the earth, so it seems justifiable to assume that she will be the first and foremost to welcome it on its revival.

In the course of the revolution we are told that "seven thousand names of men" will be slain. This evidently refers to men of name or distinction, and indicates that much blood will be shed in the course of the revolution.

There remains the question as to how God will effect the resurrection of the witnesses. When the Israelites of old forsook Him and went "awhoring after other gods" He did not simply decree that they

should return to Him, but visited them with afflictions, of ever-increasing severity, until the scales fell from their eyes and they realised how deeply they had fallen into sin. May He not use a similar method in the case with which we are dealing? What would be more in keeping with the whole tenor of the Bible than the sight of the Assyrians again swooping down upon Israel and again ravaging her lands? A great war, including, perhaps, the invasion and desolation of her territories, would indeed be the most likely means of rousing Britain to a sense of her iniquities and causing her to turn again to the Bible which she has neglected and scorned. The present war may be the one which is to effect this miracle, or it may be some future war; time alone will tell.

It is clear that judgment which falls upon the nation will also prepare it for the events of the "great day." For that day is to be a time of universal and devastating war, and prophecy tells us that during that time Israel will be separated from and at war with the other nations. For years the nations have been studiously fulfilling the decree: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles. Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears" (Joel iii. 8, 9).

Britain's disregard of the fulfilment of this sign of the times in the past is aptly described in the words of Balaam: "He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion. Who shall stir him up?" But the prophet also goes on to indicate that the lion will be roused at last: "Behold the people shall rise up as a lion, and lift himself up as a young lion. He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain." This is exactly what is happening at the present moment. The lion is roused, and it seems probable that the war will result

in a vast increase of Britain's military power. She will possess an army similar in point of numbers to those of the great Continental nations. In other words, Israel is preparing for the great battles she will be called upon to fight during the "great day."

How great will be Britain's need of all her might can be judged from the fact that during the dominion of the Antichrist she will be isolated, hated and attacked on all sides, as a result of the events connected with the resurrection of the witnesses. The prophecies tell us that she will in the end overcome all her enemies, but they also tell us that both Israel and Judah will suffer great tribulation during the domination of the Antichrist. It is also clear that those tribulations will be the result of the sins of the nation.

In these last days it will be God's purpose to redeem Israel from all sin and to make it a truly righteous people. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27). "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. . . . I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord, and I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 31-34).

The revival resulting in the resurrection of the witnesses will therefore be only partial, and will con-

stitute only a step towards the complete and final regeneration of the nation. The revival will doubtless leave untouched many who will stubbornly cling to the false doctrines in spite of all the evidence against them. There will be many also whose conversion will be but of a superficial nature, and who will soon be seduced away from faith by the wiles of unbelievers.

These will be they who will welcome the Antichrist, who will deny both Father and Son, and will come with "all power and signs and lying wonders." The credulous among both Britons and Jews will undoubtedly be impressed by the Antichrist's occult powers, and will regard him as the Messiah. "I have come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

This recrudescence of the sin of idolatry will result in tribulations, as is indicated in the prophecies. These sufferings will be terrible, but they will effect their purpose. "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. . . . Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Ezekiel also refers to this purging of Israel when he says: "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with you fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you . . . and I will cause you to pass under the rod . . . and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me."

As a result of these tribulations, therefore, Britain will be regenerate and her people "will loathe themselves in their own sight for all the evils that they have committed." Then will those who have been scattered all over the face of the globe return to the land of their fathers. "The heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their

iniquity ; because they trespassed against Me, therefore hid I My face from them and gave them into the hand of their enemies. . . . Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel . . . after that they have borne their shame and all their trespasses. . . . When I have brought them again from the people and gathered them out of their enemies' lands . . . then shall they know that I am the Lord their God " (Ezek. xxxix. 23-28).

Safe in the protection of God, the nation will then more than hold her own against the forces of the Antichrist. " According to the days of thy coming out of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might ; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth : they shall be afraid of the Lord our God " (Micah vii. 15-17). " And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle : and they shall fight because the Lord is with them, and the riders on the horses shall be confounded. And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them ; for I have mercy on them : and they shall be as though I had not cut them off. . . . And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine ; yea, their children shall see it and be glad ; their heart shall rejoice in the Lord " (Zech. x. 3-7).

Thus will the houses of Israel and Judah, or, as we have reason to believe, the British and the Jews, be finally purged of their inveterate sin of idolatry, and prepared for the part which they have to play in the great final struggle between the forces of Light

and Darkness, which will end in the overthrow of the Power of Evil. In that struggle they are to be God's "battle-axe and weapons of war." Then will they enter into the enjoyment of all the promises which God has made to their fathers, the fulfilment of which they have forced Him to defer for all these thousands of years because of the stubbornness of their hearts.

CHAPTER XIV

IS THE GREAT PYRAMID THE SIGN OF THE LORD ?

"IN that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a Pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt." So says Isaiah (xix. 19, 20); and, as we have now good reason to suppose that we have reached the period referred to as "that day," we may therefore expect to find some such witness to the Lord in Egypt.

It should be noted that the word translated as "pillar" does not mean, as might appear at first sight, an ordinary pillar such as we understand by the term, but a great and pre-eminent monument. It may refer to any large structure.

Now the great pre-eminent wonder of the world is to be found in Egypt. Throughout all ages and among all peoples the Great Pyramid of Ghizeh has been the supreme marvel of the world. The more we learn about it the more our wonder increases. We know that the builder of the Pyramid had better and more exact scientific and astronomical knowledge than we possess to-day. We know that he succeeded in achieving what we moderns have never yet accomplished. For instance, the Pyramid is the only building in the world which possesses perfect orientation, that is, its sides face exactly North, South, East and West. This may seem a simple matter, but in reality

it is extremely difficult to attain. Man has always been attempting to express perfect orientation by means of temples, churches, observatories, and monuments. The Uraniburg Observatory was built under the supervision of the most famous scientists in Europe, and yet, when completed, it was found that its orientation was wrong by five minutes of a degree. The Government of the United States decided to have a perfect point of orientation fixed on Mount Agamenticus, in the State of Maine. The utmost care was exercised, and the most skilled scientists employed. The problem was solved by three separate processes—the differences of zenith distance, absolute zenith distances, and transits in prime vertical. And yet, in spite of all this imposing array of knowledge and the utmost care, the building was found to be about a four-hundredth of a second askew.

Nevertheless, some four thousand years ago, when men believed that the earth was square, and that the sun was only a few miles away from the earth, some architect achieved perfect orientation. Of course, modern man, in his pride and arrogance, puts this achievement down to mere chance. In that case, the architect of the Pyramid must have been the most amazingly lucky man that has ever existed, for the Pyramid is literally stuffed with wonders. One lucky shot we can understand, and two or three might be allowed, but when we find that every stone and every square inch of this immense structure expresses something, and that in a thousand different ways the Pyramid is in accordance with and often in front of modern knowledge, then the theory of mere chance must be cast aside, and we must admit, however humbling to our pride it may be, that the architect of the Pyramid really knew what he was about, and that he was wiser than any architect who has lived after him. The Pyramid is the

greatest miracle that the world has ever seen, a miracle not merely for a day and seen by only a few men, but a miracle for all time, that can be observed by every generation that is not smitten with the wilful blindness of the scoffer.

There are three pyramids at Ghizeh, the great one and two smaller ones. These latter are imitations of the first, and were intended for sepulchres for the kings who built them. The great one was not intended for that purpose. Herodotus states that Cheops, the builder, was not buried in the Pyramid, and, in addition, no mummy or other evidence that it has been used as a burying-place has ever been discovered, as has been the case with the other two structures. Moreover, the smaller pyramids are only poor imitations of the first. Apart from mere size, they show many faults of construction, and much lack of knowledge, which are not evident in the Great Pyramid. Their internal structure is different, for they contain only one descending passage ending in a chamber. Moreover, the Great Pyramid was cased originally with polished marble, whereas the casing of the others was of polished granite. At first sight this may seem a point of minor importance, but it indicates the vast gulf that lay between the knowledge and science of the builder of the Great Pyramid and the ignorance of his imitators. Marble expands very slightly when exposed to heat, and contracts very little when exposed to cold. Consequently the outer stones of the Great Pyramid remain as true as on the day when they were laid. Granite, on the other hand, although it is harder and apparently more durable, undergoes comparatively great expansion and contraction when exposed to heat and cold. The casing-stones of the smaller pyramids have been exposed to the hot sun by day and to the coolness of the night for thousands of years. Hence,

instead of retaining their shape like the marble blocks, the granite casing-stones have become twisted and broken.

Other differences between the Great and the smaller pyramids are very numerous, but the following striking points will be sufficient for present purposes. The Egyptians believed that the earth was square, hence they made no allowance for the curvature of the earth's surface in their plans. The builder of the Great Pyramid was evidently aware that the earth was a globe, for the face of the rock on which the pyramid is built has been carefully bevelled to the ratio of eight inches to the mile, which we now know to be the exact curvature of the earth's surface. Hence the enormous structure has remained sound to this day, and not a crack or flaw has developed in the course of the forty centuries during which the Pyramid has been standing. The smaller pyramids are obviously constructed according to the ancient Egyptian scale of the profane cubit, which was about twenty inches. The builder of the Great Pyramid employed a different measure of length, and so far as we can discover was the only person to use that measure in ancient Egypt. That measure was the sacred cubit, about twenty-five inches, and exactly one twenty-millionth of the earth's polar axis. Whereas the orientation of the Great Pyramid is perfect, that of the smaller pyramids is imperfect. The smaller pyramids were decorated with carvings representing the gods of ancient Egypt; the Great Pyramid is wholly without decoration of any kind; it is the only plain and unornamented monument that has come down to us from those past ages.

From these considerations it is obvious that the builder of the Great Pyramid could not have been an ancient Egyptian, as were his imitators. From every point of view his knowledge was far in advance

of the age in which he lived ; indeed, as we have seen, it was in some respects in advance of the present age.

Irresistibly we are reminded of the words of Jeremiah : " The great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts, is His name. Great in counsel, and mighty in work ; for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men ; to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing ; which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day " (Jer. xxxii. 18-20).

Deny that there is any divine agency in the signs and wonders of the Great Pyramid, which are to be seen, even unto this day, and then evolution and a hundred cherished theories of modern science fall to the ground, for you admit that 4,000 years ago man was greater than he is to-day. For years past scientists have been vainly endeavouring to find some explanation of the Great Pyramid that will exclude God. Hundreds of ingenious theories have been advanced, but not one of them will stand the test of critical examination. Until somebody finds a theory which really does fit in with all the facts, every one must admit, either tacitly or openly, that the Great Pyramid is, as it appears to be, the handiwork of God Himself. Even if there were not passages in the Scriptures which lead us to expect to find some marvellous sign of God's power in Egypt, we should still be forced to the conclusion that the Great Pyramid was built under the direct guidance of God.

Who was this Cheops who is supposed to have built the Pyramid ? Herodotus states that he was not of the Egyptian race, and he also adds that the Egyptians hated him so much that they would not even mention his name. This hatred could not have been due to the fact that this king forced the people to work for him in the construction of the

Pyramid, because the kings who forced the people to build the other pyramids and the many temples and palaces of ancient Egypt did not incur such hatred ; indeed many of them were held in the highest honour. Moreover, Herodotus adds that the people engaged in building the Great Pyramid were far better treated than those who built the others. He states that they worked in relays, each of only three months in the year ; and that they were supplied with free food by the authorities. Obviously, it was not the Pyramid, but what the Pyramid stood for, that incurred the hatred of the Egyptians. Herodotus provides the explanation of the hatred when he says that the Egyptian priests denounced the builder of the Pyramid and his successors because "they plunged into every kind of wickedness." Nothing could be more wicked, from the point of view of an ancient Egyptian priest, than the overturning of the old pagan gods. This is what Cheops actually did, as is evident from the lack of any reference to the old gods, either within or outside the Pyramid. The builder of the Pyramid, therefore, was not only a foreigner, but also did not worship idols.

From the monuments and records of ancient Egypt it has been proved that there was at one time a race of "shepherd kings" who put an end to the worship of the gods. It will be noted that these kings were shepherds, and so followed the same occupation as Noah, Shem, and the other patriarchs who had a knowledge of the true God and lived about the time of the building of the Pyramid. This event, among others, is symbolised in the Egyptian mythology by the death of Osiris, who is represented as being forced to transfer his attentions to another land. This moving of the god to another land represents the migration of a number of Egyptians, who subsequently grew into the people known in the

Bible as the Philistines, the modern representatives of whom, so it has been asserted, are to be found in the inhabitants of central and southern Ireland.

On the fall of these kings the priests again came into power, and the old gods were restored. To show their hatred of the false "shepherd kings," the priests caused every reference to them to be erased from the monuments and made the first and chief of the kings, Cheops or Suphis, the god of the Egyptian nether regions under the name of Set.

The pyramid kings of Herodotus and the hated shepherd kings of the Egyptians were evidently the same persons. They were not Egyptians, but came from some nomadic peoples, and did not worship idols. The only people of whom we have any knowledge who were not sunk in idolatry at that time were the patriarchs mentioned in the Bible, who also were nomads. Hence there is good ground for the assumption that the builder of the Pyramid must have been one of the patriarchs, who for a time ruled over the Egyptians.

This assumption is strengthened by the portraits which we have of the old shepherd kings. The oldest sphinxes were built during the times of those kings, and were portraits of the occupants of the throne. It was long thought that, because the sphinx was represented as having long hair, it was the portrait of a woman. But the Tanis sphinxes have beards as well as long hair. And we now know that the Great Sphinx also had a beard at one time, but that portion decayed and fell away. The fallen portions were discovered buried in the sand some time ago. The shepherd kings, therefore, wore their hair long and had flowing beards. The Egyptians, on the other hand, always shaved with scrupulous care, and wore their hair comparatively short. Long hair and flowing beards were a distinguishing feature of the old

patriarchs. Again, all the sphinxes are noticeably of a Semitic cast of countenance, and have no likeness to the typical Egyptian face.

In dealing with such remote antiquity it is, of course, impossible to prove anything with absolute certainty. The evidence at our disposal is too vague and slender to enable us to make any definite assertion. But we may say with confidence that such evidence as there is leads us to believe it probable that the Great Pyramid was built by one of the old patriarchs of the Bible, and that the builder in question was none other than Shem, the son of Noah.

It is interesting to recall that the theory has also been advanced that Shem was, in addition, the writer of that portion of the Scriptures known as the Book of Job. That book is one of the most ancient pieces of written composition in the world, there being evidence that it must have been written at least two centuries before Moses began the Book of Genesis. Shem was the leading patriarch of that time, which was also the period during which the Great Pyramid was built.

CHAPTER XV

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE PYRAMID

APART from the marvellous scientific knowledge displayed in the construction of the Great Pyramid which points to some superhuman agency, there is one other fact which leads us to the conclusion that it is indeed the sign and witness of God. It has been shown that in the stones of the Pyramid there is a complete history of the world, that this massive monument of the past is, in fact, a prophet whose words are available for the ears of every generation which has the faith to understand and to take heed.

The other pyramids built in imitation of it have only descending passages leading to the underground vault in the centre, intended as the tomb of the builder. The Great Pyramid alone has the ascending passage, the great gallery, and the King's and Queen's chambers. These features were unknown to the builders of the imitation pyramids, and they remained unknown for nearly 3,000 years, a secret known only to Him who had caused them to be made. Yet the designer knew that at some time they would be discovered, in spite of all the care that he had taken to bury them in the heart of the stone. These upper passages and chambers were obviously sealed at the time when they were constructed, 4,000 years ago. But they were not hermetically sealed. If they had been so sealed, those who discovered them would not have been able to explore them, but would have

died of asphyxiation. The passages and chambers are provided with a constant supply of fresh air by means of shafts, leading to the outer surface of the Pyramid at a great height from the ground. It was the obvious intention of the designer, therefore, that the secrets contained in the heart of the Pyramid should remain hidden from the world for a long time, but that they should in due course be discovered and explored.

The existence of these passages and chambers was discovered by an apparent accident during the ninth century of the Christian era. From time immemorial there had been legends concerning the fabulous riches which were contained in the Pyramid, and innumerable attempts were made to get hold of the wealth. All failed, however, until the days of the Caliph Al Mamoun. By that time the entrance to the descending passage and the underground vault had been lost sight of. The Caliph, therefore, began to tunnel through the northern side of the structure. The labour involved in this task was terrific, and the undertaking was about to be given up as fruitless when one of the workmen heard the sound of a falling stone in the interior. Thus encouraged, a further effort was made, and the descending passage, the existence of which was known to the ancient Egyptians, was rediscovered. To the Caliph's disappointment, the passage and the vault at the end were found to be quite empty. Thanks, however, to the fallen stone the Caliph made a discovery which had been denied to the ancient Egyptians, and has subsequently been found to be of more value than all the jewels that he ever dreamed of finding. The stone which had fallen had originally hidden the ascending passage, the entrance to which was now revealed for the first time since the Pyramid had been built.

But this ascending passage was blocked by a huge

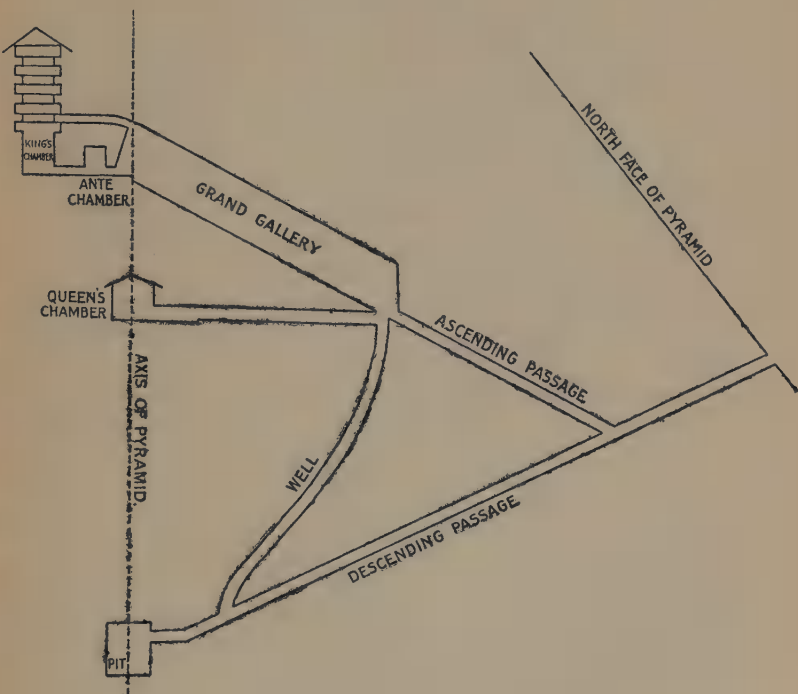
piece of granite, so solid that the workmen of the Caliph had not tools capable of cutting it away. It was necessary, therefore, to cut through the softer limestone surrounding the granite before it was possible to enter the ascending passage and to explore what lay beyond. Once more the Caliph's dreams of avarice were doomed to disappointment. He discovered nothing but empty passages and chambers, all of the finest workmanship, and an empty granite coffer without a lid.

For another thousand years the Pyramid stood neglected and scorned. Man could not appreciate the marvellous knowledge which had gone towards its making, far less could he guess of the secrets that the passages contained. The structure was regarded as a monument of human foolishness and wasted labour. Men thought of the vast amount of labour that had been necessary to build up this thing, they drew harrowing pictures of wretched slaves, generally Israelites, forced by merciless tyrants painfully to place stone upon stone until death from exhaustion put an end to their miseries. And it was all seemingly without purpose, for it did not even serve as the tomb of a long-forgotten king.

But light has been given us in these latter days, and we know that the Great Pyramid, far from being useless, is a veritable Bible in stone.

An idea of the arrangement of the galleries and chambers contained in the Great Pyramid will be obtained from the diagram given below. There is, first of all the descending gallery leading to the pit. About ninety feet from the entrance is the beginning of the ascending gallery. After proceeding for about 130 feet, this gallery opens out into the Grand Gallery which extends for a further 150 feet. The descending and ascending galleries are both about 4 feet high and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide. The Grand Gallery is

seven times as high and twice as wide as the other galleries. At the end of the Grand Gallery there is a low passage leading to the Antechamber and subsequently to the King's Chamber, which is 34 feet



long, 17 feet wide, and 19 feet high. Where the ascending gallery opens out into the Grand Gallery there is another low passage, which proceeds horizontally to the Queen's Chamber, which is smaller than the King's Chamber, and is situated exactly on the

axis of the Pyramid, whereas the King's Chamber is to the south of the axis.

The names of the Chambers arose from the assumption of early investigators that the larger chamber was intended as the burial-place of the king who caused the Pyramid to be built and the smaller for his queen. Of course, no mummies or other evidence that such was the intention of the builder have ever been discovered, but, as all the other pyramids were built as sepulchres, it was assumed that the Great Pyramid was erected for a like purpose.

To understand the symbolism of the Chambers and Galleries, it is necessary, first of all, to have a knowledge of their dimensions.

Two units of measure were employed in the construction of the Pyramid. Sometimes the ordinary Egyptian cubit of 25·625 inches was used, as in the case of all the other pyramids ; but, unlike the other monuments of ancient Egypt, many of the most important measurements must be made in terms of the sacred cubit of 25·025 inches, the unit used in the construction of the Tabernacle and the Ark.

The length of the sides of the Pyramid are 365·242 sacred cubits. This is the exact number of days and fraction of a day to the very second contained in the solar year. It was not, of course, until thousands of years after the building of the Pyramid that man was able to make an exact calculation as to the length of that period. Another discovery of modern astronomical science, in fact a very recent discovery, with which the builder of the Pyramid was acquainted, was the fact that the number of years in the precession of equinoxes is 25,827. The lengths of the diagonals of the base, when added together, amount to that figure exactly.

The builder could also hold his own with any modern professor of mathematics. He managed to

square the circle exactly, a feat which the modern professor cannot accomplish with complete accuracy, even though he calls to his aid Walli's Indivisibles, Newton's Fluxions, and Leibnitz's Calculus. The height of the Pyramid is the radius of a circle of which the circumference is equal to the combined lengths of the four equal sides of the base.

Ancient astronomers estimated that the sun was about 10 miles from the earth. Even to-day we cannot estimate the distance exactly. We can only say that it is somewhere between 91,000,000 and 92,000,000 miles. If, however, we multiply the height of the Pyramid by 10,000,000,000, we get 91,837,322 miles, which is, for all we know, the exact distance. Certainly it is as correct as we can judge.

So far, too, as we can judge from the present state of scientific knowledge, the weight of the Pyramid, 5,923,000 tons, is exactly one-billionth of the weight of the earth.

The internal dimensions of the Pyramid are equally remarkable. Thus, there is, in the Antechamber, a square granite slab, the area of which is exactly one-fiftieth of the area of the vertical section of the Pyramid and exactly equal to the area of a circle the diameter of which is the length of the floor of the chamber. Hence we have another example of the fact that the builder was able to square the circle. Moreover, the length of the Antechamber represents the diameter of a circle of which the circumference is 365.242—the exact number of days and fraction of a day contained in the solar year. The sides of the Pyramid, as has already been mentioned, bear an exactly similar relation to the length of the solar year.

That the designer of the Pyramid used the sacred cubit as the unit for his measurements is proved by the fact that in the Queen's Chamber he has purposely called attention to that measure. In the east

wall of the chamber there is a niche sunk in the wall, exactly one sacred cubit away from the centre, and for no apparent reason. This eccentricity might be due only to accident, but in order to call attention to it and to emphasise the distance from the centre, a similar phenomenon is observable in the Antechamber. On the face of the granite slab on the wall of that chamber there is a small semicircular boss, just one inch away from the centre of the slab. These divergences are obviously intended to call attention one to the other.

The length of the King's Chamber is the diameter of a circle the area of which, in square inches, exactly equals the area of the base of the Pyramid in square cubits. The cubit diagonal of the chamber is five times the length of the granite slab in the Antechamber, and if the diagonal be multiplied by ten and squared the result equals the area of the vertical section of the Pyramid. There are also a number of other relations between the dimensions of the King's Chamber and those of the Antechamber.

One of the most interesting portions of the Pyramid is the Granite Coffin contained in the King's Chamber. Unfortunately the Coffin has been a good deal chipped and knocked about by those who were ignorant of its significance, and its measurements cannot be taken with absolute exactness. They can, however, be approximated with sufficient accuracy to enable us to make a number of remarkable deductions. Thus, the outside length plus the breadth equals the circumference of a circle of which the diameter is the outside height. The inside cubic diagonal is a quarter of that of the Queen's Chamber. The inside periphery equals the circumference of a circle the diameter of which is the outside breadth of the ends. The outside perimeter of the Coffin is half the cubic diagonal of the King's Chamber.

Many more relationships between the various dimensions of the Pyramid might be mentioned, but those already cited are sufficient to show the marvellous nature of the structure. The greatest mathematical genius of modern times could not construct a geometrical figure which would express all these relationships and which would be such a storehouse of scientific knowledge.

Among all these relationships it is remarkable that the cubic capacity of the Coffin bears no apparent relation to that of any of the chambers. But it is more remarkable, and exceedingly significant, that the capacity of the Coffin is, so far as it is possible to judge, exactly equal to that of the sacred Ark of the Covenant. This gives the key to the whole symbolism of the Pyramid. The Coffin is related to the various chambers in a hundred different ways; it is also related to the Ark of the Covenant; therefore, the rest of the Pyramid is also related to the Ark and thereby to the Word of God.

We can now see that time and again reference is made to the Pyramid in both the Old and New Testaments. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measure thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the sockets thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?" (Job xxxviii. 4-6). The only form of building which has a single corner-stone is a pyramid. The reference to sockets is also significant, for at each corner of the base of the Pyramid a socket is sunk into the rock to form a foundation.

As is well known, there are a number of other references in the Scriptures to a single corner stone. All these, both in the Old and the New Testaments, refer to Christ. He is "the head corner stone"

and "the chief corner stone" and "the corner stone that the builders rejected." Again, in the vision of the image of King Nebuchadnezzar it is a "stone cut without hands" that overwhelms the various powers symbolised by the metals of which the image was composed. And there is one fact which gives all these references to a corner stone a peculiar significance, in addition to a pyramid being the only form of structure in which there is only one corner stone, and in which the corner stone is also the head stone. The corner stone of the Pyramid is lacking; it has been rejected by the builders.

It has been claimed that these considerations prove that the Pyramid, like the Bible, is an epitome of the history of the world, past, present, and future, that there are divinely inspired prophecies in the stones of the Pyramid as there are in the words of the Bible. We have, then, to examine these prophecies in stone, and also to see how far the deductions which we draw from them agree with those which we have drawn from the written Word of God.

Just as, in the chronology symbolised in the prophecies of the Bible, the standard used for their interpretation is that of a year for a day, so that used in interpreting the chronology of the prophecies of the Pyramid is that of an inch for a year. The inch referred to, of course, is the sacred inch, corresponding to the sacred cubit, and equal to one and one-thousandth English inches. Adopting this basis, it is asserted that the descending passage, as far as the point where it meets the ascending passage, represents the chronology of the human race from the Deluge to the Exodus. The first ascending passage represents the period of the Jewish dispensation ending in the birth of the Messiah. The Grand Gallery symbolises the Christian era, ending with the second coming of Christ.

It will be seen from the diagram that near the beginning of the Grand Gallery there is a steep shaft which leads down to the descending passage which ends in the pit. This pit is by some taken to represent the "bottomless pit" of the Scriptures and the shaft, or Well, as it has been called, the Crucifixion and Descent into Hell.

But these interpretations are not quite correct in matters of detail, and the problem is not so easily solved as would appear at first sight. For instance, the distance from the beginning of the Grand Gallery to the Well is 39 inches, which, if the interpretation were correct, would indicate that the Crucifixion took place thirty-nine years after the birth of Christ. And there is abundant evidence from other sources that the Crucifixion took place about thirty-three years after Christ's birth. Again, the length of the Grand Gallery is 1,881 inches, which would indicate that the second coming of Christ would happen somewhere about the year 1882, which, of course, was not the case. Moreover, the diameter of the mouth of the Well is 28 inches, which would indicate that the period between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection was twenty-eight years instead of three days.

For a long time these objections could not be avoided. The position was tantalising. The whole scheme of the Pyramid obviously agreed in broad outline with the suggested interpretation, but, as soon as the interpretation was applied in detail, these inconsistencies formed a seemingly unscalable obstacle.

At last it was suggested that the Christian era could not be regarded as beginning until the death of Christ, for it was not until that great act of Atonement that Christianity became available for all peoples. That is to say, that the beginning of the

Grand Gallery must be taken as symbolising, not the birth of Christ, but the year A.D. 31—that is, 33 years after Christ was born in B.C. 2. Moreover, it will be noticed that at the point where the Well starts on its downward course there is a low horizontal passage leading to the Queen's Chamber. Now, if the first descending passage represents the events down to the Exodus, a period which, as we know from the Bible, was remarkable for the steady growth of idolatry and decline in the worship of the true God, and the first ascending passage represents the Jewish dispensation, a time when the true God was revealed to one people, then the continuance of the descending passage ending in the Pit must represent the career of the other peoples who continued in idolatry and on the downward path which leads to perdition. Similarly, the Grand Gallery continues to ascend from the Jewish dispensation; and so the horizontal gallery must represent the career of a people who worshipped the true God, but did not enjoy the blessings of Christianity, and who, in spite of that fact, will not in the end be consigned to the bottomless pit. Obviously, the only people fulfilling these requirements are the Jews. The Well being at the beginning of the horizontal passage must represent, not Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection, but some calamitous events extending over a number of years and happening at the beginning of the time when the Jews fell into the state represented by the passage. As is well known, the Jews in the early years of the present era suffered the most terrible tribulations to which the house of Judah had ever been subjected. These events culminated in the fall of Jerusalem, the scattering of the remnant of the people among the Gentiles, and the utter desolation of Palestine.

In the light of these considerations the whole

prophetic scheme of the Pyramid becomes clear and precise. The symbolism of the passages fits in exactly with the revised interpretation, and enables us to say with certainty that, so far as we can check it—that is, so far as it deals with the past—the Pyramid is an exact history of the human race from the Flood onwards. The distance between the beginning of the Grand Gallery and the centre of the Well is 39 inches, which would give the year 70 A.D. as the date of the culminating event of the tribulations of the Jews. It is a matter of history that it actually was in that year that Titus captured Jerusalem, after a siege of five months.

When we come to examine the galleries in detail the completeness of the symbolism is amazing. For instance, the Christian era began with a definite event, the Crucifixion, consequently its beginning is symbolised by the sudden expansion of the ascending passage into the Grand Gallery. The Jewish dispensation, on the other hand, did not originate in any sharply marked event, but there was a period of transition, that of the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, between the times of the patriarchs and the entry into the promised land. Consequently there is a vagueness as to the exact point which is to be taken as the beginning of the ascending passage. The date of the entry into the promised land is indicated by the beginning of the floor-line of the passage, but the intervening space between that point and the floor-line of the descending passage indicates a period of transition between the two dispensations symbolised by the two passages. Again, the increased blessings gained by man in the Christian era are strikingly symbolised in the sudden increase in height. The other passages are only 4 feet high, and a man cannot stand upright in them, but the Grand Gallery is seven times the height, and after his cramped

journey through the passages man can at last draw himself up to his full height and feel that he is indeed a man.

The details of the Queen's Chamber are even more strikingly symbolical of the actual state of affairs of the world. The passage leading to it is low, like the others, and again a man has practically to crawl. But the floor of the last seventh of the passage slopes downwards, giving more room to the explorer. This obviously symbolises the great improvement which has taken place during recent years in the social status of the Jew. Seven is a sacred number, which is held in special veneration by the Jews. The Sabbath is the seventh day, and the number is continually appearing in the Scriptures. Indeed, as has already been shown, the whole scheme of the universe has been built up on the number seven. Consequently, the Queen's Chamber is seven-sided. During the greater part of the Christian era the Jews have been spiritually in a state of stagnation, as is symbolised by the fact that the passage is horizontal and not ascending towards the light. Nothing is more suggestive of stagnation than foul air, and until a few years ago the horizontal passage and the Queen's Chamber were rendered extremely unpleasant by their lack of ventilation. The other galleries and chambers have always been well ventilated. Then, one day, an investigator happened to tap the walls of the Queen's Chamber with a hammer. As a result, he discovered two tubes leading to the outer air. These tubes had stopped short an inch away from the wall of the chamber. It is remarkable that that inch of stone was not cut away and fresh air did not begin to sweeten the Queen's Chamber and the horizontal passage until the end of the nineteenth century, a time when the Jews began to display a growing disposition to be converted to Christianity, and several

missions for spreading Christianity among them took their rise.

All that need be said here concerning the first descending and the ascending passages, which refer to the times between the date of the Flood and the Resurrection, is that the measurements of these passages correspond with remarkable exactness with the chronology of the Bible. The periods, however, with which we are naturally the most interested are the era in which we live and the future. It will be noticed that at the top of the Grand Gallery there is the Great Step the foot of which is 1,813 inches from the beginning of the gallery and thus indicates the year 1844. With the Step the gallery no longer ascends, but proceeds in a horizontal direction, as does the passage below. This would indicate that at about the middle of the last century there should have begun a period of spiritual decadence which will continue to the end of the dispensation. Every unprejudiced person will agree that such a period did begin at that time, and that the decay of interest in religion has continued ever since. We have only to consider the case of Britain, which, ever since the Reformation, has always been the acknowledged stronghold of Christianity. After 1850 there was a flood of infidel philosophers whose teachings attracted wide attention and many converts. The revolutionary spirit began to manifest itself, and bitter industrial strikes became increasingly frequent. Manners and morals decayed; the "English Sabbath" began to give place to the "Continental Sunday," the attendance at the churches and chapels began to dwindle, and Sunday sports and amusements became the order of the day. Frivolity and extravagance increased among all classes. Home life decayed, and children were no longer taught God's Word at the knees of their mothers. Interest in the various

forms of occultism began to grow, and further increased the indifference to true religion. Even ministers of God were affected by the change. The Higher Criticism and the New Theology, both of which aim at denying the divine nature of the Bible, began to attract attention. These and a thousand other signs prove that the builder of the Pyramid was a true prophet when he represented these last seventy years by the dead-level of the Great Step.

The length of the Grand Gallery is 1883 inches, and so the Pyramid indicates that the year 1914, the year when the Great War broke out, was the end of the Christian dispensation, and that we are now at the beginning of the "Great Day of the Lord," the Day when all the prophecies contained in the Book of Revelation are to be fulfilled.

Before passing on to the cramped passage that represents these final days, however, it is worthy of notice that the wall which marks the end of the Grand Gallery is not vertical, but overhangs to the extent of about seven inches. This would indicate that during the last seven years of the dispensation, that is, from 1907 onwards, there is to be a rapid increase in the falling away from God, which began about the middle of the eighteenth century. Again the prophecy has been fulfilled, for during these last few years all the influences which had been for years whittling away the people's faith in God received a vast increase of vigour and resulted in an orgy of Agnosticism and indifference. Well, indeed, might the designer of the Pyramid indicate the spiritual condition of mankind at the present time by the cramped passage leading to the Antechamber and the King's Chamber.

Many attempts have been made to interpret the chronology of the way of the Lord and to forecast the actual year of the second coming of Christ. But

in this last passage the interpretation breaks down. The Antechamber doubtless refers to the Millennium and the King's Chamber to the final establishment of the Kingdom of Christ. But the length of the floor of the Antechamber is not a thousand inches, which it should be, for we know that the Millennium will last a thousand years. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that all that the Pyramid tells concerning the final events is that the way to the Kingdom of Christ will be difficult, just as it is difficult to traverse the passage leading to the King's Chamber.

At first sight this failure of the builder to complete his scheme may seem remarkable, but a moment's thought shows that such a thing is only to be expected, and adds further evidence in support of the belief that it was God Himself who directed the building of the Pyramid.

These stone prophecies refer primarily to chronology, and only indicate events fortuitously. The Biblical prophecies, on the other hand, refer both to chronology and to events. It is a remarkable fact that the chronological prophecies of the Bible, like those of the Pyramid, stop short at the end of the Christian dispensation. Only those prophecies which refer wholly to events continue to the end of the final days. It is as impossible to estimate the chronology of the Day of the Lord from the Bible as it is to do so from the Pyramid. All we know is that certain events will happen, but it is not given to us to know their "times and seasons."

In this impressive unity of scheme between Book and Pyramid we have additional proof that each is the work of the same almighty Hand. At every point, from the beginning to the end, each supports and sustains the other in a manner which can be only the result of God's ordinance. They were no idle

words which were put in the mouth of the prophet when he said : " In that day there shall be an altar in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord ; and it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt."

PART II

WHAT ARE WE TO EXPECT?

INTRODUCTORY TO PART II

THERE is no more fascinating Book in the Scriptures than that of Revelation, for it deals with the future, ■ subject which man throughout the ages has been attempting to probe. At the present time that interest has been increased a thousand-fold. But a short while ago the world was at peace, men prided themselves on their vast discoveries in the realms of knowledge and understanding, they believed that they were rapidly advancing towards the modern millennium, the era of the completely scientific man. The future was obviously well able to take care of itself.

Then the storm-clouds burst and the dreams of yesterday vanished into nothingness. Stripped of his illusions, man discovered that the culture of which he had been so proud was but a thin veneer, beneath which lurked the old primeval man who was supposed to have been evolved out of existence. The future is no longer a placid journey towards material perfection, but a time of fear and apprehension. Men are rubbing their eyes and asking themselves what is to happen next, what do all these things mean ?

Those who have, in spite of the spiritual decay of these latter years, still retained their faith in God's Word know that all these things were predicted by the prophets many ages ago, and that they are signs that the end of the world is at hand. They know that in these final days man is to be purged

of his sin and the Evil One finally destroyed, and that this process will necessitate many tribulations, such as man has never endured before. But they also know that these tribulations lead to the most glorious of all things, the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ and the eternal bliss of them that believe.

These last events are continually referred to by the prophets in the Old Testament, and by Christ, His apostles, and, finally, John in the New. But it is not given to man to interpret these things clearly.

Bishop Newton remarked that the Book of Revelation either found or left a man mad. There was some justification for the remark, for no Book of the Scriptures is so intricate, so exasperating, and so provocative of controversy as the last. No two expositors are in complete accord, innumerable interpretations can be made and multitudinous arguments can be brought forward in support of and against them all.

This vagueness does not prove the fallacy of the Book, as has been held by scoffers. It proves that the Book is in strict accord with the rest of the Scriptures. The prophecies were not given to man in order that he might say with certainty that this and that event are to happen in the future. Their purpose was to stand as a perpetual witness to the Omnipotence, All-knowledge and Immanence of God, for those who cared to give heed to them. Man might believe or not; that was for him to decide for himself of his own free will. If he believed and followed the injunctions of God, then he would be rewarded; if he rejected God and fell into sin, he would be punished. God knew that man was weak, and that none would be free from sin, but He also knew that there would be many who would honestly try to live in accordance with His commands, in so far as their frailty would allow, and would remain

constant in faith. It was for the benefit of these that the prophecies were given, to encourage them to endure in faith. In times of trial, when tribulations and doubts oppressed them, the prophecies were there to tell them that these things must be; and in times of plenty the prophecies were there to warn them that the misuse of the ease which God had given them would surely be visited with punishment. As the ages have rolled by and the prophecies have received fulfilment, so the Bible has become a surer and stronger support for the faithful. This is only what we should expect of the God of Mercy and the God of Justice. When God chose the Israelites to be His people He made a covenant with them promising them many glories if they followed Him. He warned them that if they fell away from Him He would punish them. They fell, and He punished them. They repented, and He restored them to His favour. The Israelites thus had proof that God does not use words idly. But in His mercy He gave them further warnings that if they were to fall from Him again their punishment would be more stern than before. But, in spite of the proof and the further warnings, they fell again and were duly punished, the punishment being more severe than the first. So the Israelites have, in spite of increasingly heavy punishments and constant warnings, persisted in their blindness and disobedience. At last they have received the most condign punishment of all. They have been dispersed among the Gentiles whom they scorned, part of them have been subjected to the most terrible desolation and abasement, the remainder have been made to forget the fact that they have a share in the glorious covenant which God made with Abraham.

As with the Israelites, so it is with the modern Christians. They have ample proof that God's Word

is true, terribly true. They can have no more firm support for their faith and no more complete warning than that which God has placed in their hands. If their faith proves wanting and they fall away, in spite of all, will not the God of Justice require them to suffer in accordance with the magnitude of their fall ?

The Book of Revelation, then, is God's last warning to mankind. It is, above all, addressed to this generation. It tells them that the time has come when God is going to assert His power, and sin and wickedness are to be purged from the earth. This is the time of the final testing of faith. It warns us that many tribulations are to come, more dire than any that have yet been visited upon man, and that they will be as complete in their inexorable justice as the previous warnings have been complete in their infinite mercy. Those who rebel are to suffer as they deserve, but those who remain steadfast and hold fast to their faith in the Lord of hosts will finally enter into His Kingdom.

The fact, therefore, that all we can say from the perusal of the Book of Revelation is that we expect or think it probable that this or that event will happen in the near future is no reason why we should refuse to study that Book. To give no heed to a warning simply because it is symbolical and beyond our powers of comprehension is merely to follow the example of the Israelites. The position of the world to-day and the ingrained perversity of man in regard to spiritual matters may be illustrated by a worldly simile.

Suppose the richest man in the world were to promise that you should share in his wealth so long as you obeyed him. Suppose that you agreed, and did actually enjoy great riches for a time, but that you grew careless, forgot his commands, and as a result

became a pauper. Suppose that, in your misery, you appealed for another chance, which was accorded to you, and you became rich again. Suppose that this process of obedience and wealth, alternating with disobedience and poverty, continued for a number of years. Then, one day, you receive a warning in your benefactor's handwriting. "Woe unto him who shall suffer, for his misery shall be complete, and he shall die of starvation. But glory to them that are my friends, for they shall share all my joys." Would you disregard that warning, after all your previous experience of the rich man's power, simply because the warning does not give details of the misery or the promised joys? And yet that is exactly how man is treating God's last warning to him in these final days.

Far from being profitless, therefore, the study of the Apocalypse is essential for those who at the present day hope to share in the glories promised as the reward of those who hold fast to their faith in Christ. This is the eleventh hour, and those who would enter into the Kingdom must lose no time in preparing themselves for the great time of trial before them. Mankind is now called upon to decide finally and irretrievably whom he is to follow, the true God or the false prophets. The decision lies in the hands of every man, and in His mercy God has given each and every one the utmost encouragement to choose rightly.

As has been already mentioned, the very nature of the Apocalypse renders it impossible for man to give a complete interpretation of its prophecies. Innumerable attempts have been made, and many considerations advanced, but none may say which is right. Broadly, the interpretations fall into two classes: those which look for the second advent of Christ to be before the Millennium, and those which

hold that that event will not take place until the close of the millennial period.

It is, however, essential that, in the interests of truth, the student should remember that these interpretations are but guesses, the exactness of which time alone will enable us to judge; that there are many considerations which can be advanced for and against every interpretation; and, finally, that, as in the case of so many of the Biblical prophecies, those of the Apocalypse are destined to receive not one, but many fulfilments, both literal and symbolical.

CHAPTER XVI

WILL THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST BE AFTER THE MILLENNIUM ?

THE second coming of Christ has been described as the pole-star of the Church. Indeed, it is the great culminating event towards which the whole of the New Testament leads. Innumerable passages could be cited to prove the fact that the event was regarded as of the most sublime importance by both Christ and His apostles. There is hardly a chapter which does not contain some reference to the great day when the Lord shall come "with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 14), and "with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7).

The distinguishing excellence of the Corinthians was that they "waited for Christ." "Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 7, 8).

It has been suggested that the death of any individual is for him the second coming of Christ. Death is to him the end of time and the opening of eternity. It is his call to the judgment-seat of Christ. Death is, indeed, a partial fulfilment of the prophecies regarding the second coming, but it cannot be admitted that it is complete fulfilment. If it were the

complete fulfilment it would be contrary to the spirit of the Scriptures, for it would not be an event of such colossal importance to the world as we are told that the second coming will actually be. Again, the second coming is always represented as something exceptionally joyous for believers; but there is nothing joyous in death. It may have no terrors for the true believer, but it is often a time of pain and always an occasion of sorrow among others. And we are expressly told that at the real second coming all the redeemed will be gathered together and glorified, perfectly, publicly, and simultaneously. There will be no association of death with that time, for death is always regarded in the Scriptures as interwoven with sin and tribulation.

No Christian can doubt that the prophecies concerning the second advent, however partially they may be fulfilled in the case of individuals, will receive a complete fulfilment, and before all mankind, at some time in the future. And we have already seen that that time is rapidly approaching, in fact, that from whatever point of view we regard the present, we are now on the very threshold of the great events of the End.

A number of people have accepted the theory that Christ's coming will occur before the promised Millennium, because of the difficulty of associating the words "watching" and "waiting" and a general expectation with an event which is not to happen until after a period of a thousand years which has not yet even begun. In the first place, it is by no means certain that the Millennium is to last exactly a thousand years, a period of time which is referred to in connection with no other event mentioned in the Bible; and, in the second, it is obvious from the Scriptures that a considerable time is to elapse between the first and second advents. There are constant references to

the "tarrying bridegroom," and there are Christ's own words of comfort to all believers: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This last certainly shows that Christians are not to expect the return of the Lord until after a very long time, in spite of the injunctions to "watch and pray." Again, St. Luke, in recording the parable of the Pounds, begins by saying: "He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Obviously, the intention of Christ in that parable was to indicate, not only to the apostles, but to all believers, that the second coming must not be regarded as immediate. After all, it is quite possible to look forward to and hope for an event, even if it is certain that the event is not to happen for some time. And was not the blindness and consequent fall of the Jews due to the fact that they expected the glorious coming of the Saviour to happen not merely before the Millennium, but before the Christian dispensation? The history of the Jews is a warning against allowing oneself to be persuaded that the coming of the Lord will be soon. Mere impatience was never a virtue, but the apostle expressly commends "the patience of hope."

The question which we have to consider is whether the fleshly state of man will come to an end at the second coming, or whether it will continue, in spite of all its imperfections, for another thousand years.

The second coming is often symbolised as a wedding feast, with Christ as the Bridegroom, and the Church, that is to say, the Christian community, as the bride. Are we then right in assuming that the bride will be worthy of the Bridegroom, in other words that the Church will be complete at the second coming? It is only the post-millennial theory that admits this as possible. For if the opposite view be correct, then

the Church cannot be complete at that time, for many who are ultimately to be saved will continue in their fleshly state for another thousand years. Hence the pre-millennial theory forces us to the assumption that the bride will not be completely worthy of the Bridegroom, which does not appear to be quite in accordance with the divine order of things.

There are several passages which throw light on this subject. For instance, "But each in his own order : Christ the first fruits ; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming " (1 Cor. xv. 23). In the same chapter are the words, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that have believed in that day " (2 Thess. i. 10). "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy " (Jude 24). "And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight " (Col. i. 21, 22). "To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints " (1 Thess. iii. 13).

The purport of these and many other passages is the same. The Church will be absolutely complete at the second coming. It will possess spotless purity, as "a chaste virgin," and will be resplendent with glory as the Bride of the Lamb.

Passages of the Scriptures have been cited as opposed to this view. For instance : "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and

give honour to Him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb ” (Rev. xix. 6-9).

From this it would appear at first sight that the marriage of the Lamb is to take place immediately after the fall of the Antichrist, and be previous to the Millennium, when, as all are agreed, the number of the elect will not be complete. It is, however, an acknowledged danger to found theology on figurative prophecy, such as this, and it may be doubted whether the event referred to is the consummation of the symbolical marriage between Christ and His Church. This marriage is referred to in three different ways in the Scriptures. The first stage is the first coming of Christ ; the second is the Christian era, beginning with the Crucifixion, when the blessings of Christianity became available to all men, and “ many more were called ” ; and the third stage is the second coming. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to assume that the marriage referred to in this passage in Revelation is not the completed marriage signified in the second coming, but an intervening stage leading up and previous to that event.

We may assume, then, that the Church will be complete at the time of the second advent. A necessary outcome of this assumption is the further one that with the coming of Christ the means of grace and the agencies whereby man may attain salvation will disappear, for there will be no more work for them. On the other hand, a necessary corollary of the pre-millennial theory is that these means of grace will continue after the coming, for there will still be many who must be saved in order to complete the work

of Christ. Obviously, then, if it can be shown that at the second coming the means of grace and salvation will cease, then it will be impossible for any more to be saved, for they will lack the means.

The only means of grace are the Scriptures, the written Word of God. Hence they provide a means by which we many find a solution to this problem. If any are to be saved after the second coming, then the object of the Scriptures will not be exhausted by that event, but they will contain words written specially for those who are alive after that event. If the Church is complete, and no more are to be saved, then the object of the Scriptures will be exhausted, and they will have nothing more to say to mankind.

It will be obvious to every reader of the Bible that the second coming is the goal of all revelation. The sole purpose of the Scriptures, and the only purpose to which they lay any claim, is to prepare men for that great happening. To every reader to whom they address themselves the second coming lies in the future. When Christ does come mankind will be able to close the Bible and write "Finis" across it. It will have nothing more to tell him. With Christ actually present there will be no further need for a deputy.

The whole force of the Bible's teaching depends on the second advent being a future event. All its adjurations to the faithful to be patient and hopeful, watchful, and zealous cease with the coming of the Lord. "Occupy till I come," "Be patient, therefore, unto the coming of the Lord," "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour." The whole burden of these and innumerable other passages is that we are to look forward to Christ's coming. To a man living after that event they would not have the slightest application. What force would such words as "Behold, I come quickly" have to such a

man ? With the aid of the Bible the faithful are, as it were, poised between the two comings of Christ. They look back with faith, and forward with hope, but they cannot see further than the second coming. Moreover, all the warnings to sinners as to the suddenness and finality of the dread event lose their force if there will still be time for such to be saved after it has happened. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. iii. 10). "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank . . . until the day that Noe entered into the ark ; and the flood came and destroyed them all. . . . Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed" (Luke xvii. 26-30). This last passage certainly indicates that none are to be saved after the second coming.

It is evident too that the institutions of Baptism and the sacrament of the Last Supper will cease to have any significance after the second coming. Thus, in the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew we read : "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you alway ; even unto the end of the world." Again, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). These two passages clearly show that these institutions will cease to have any significance or efficacy after the event so emphatically mentioned in each case.

From these considerations it follows that Christ's mediatorial work will also come to an end. This is indicated by the following passage : "By His own

blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once, in the end of the world, hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 12-28). This not only indicates the whole object of Christ's intercession, but also clearly shows that that work will be completed at the second coming. Christ's first appearance was to put away sin by means of His appearance before God as the intercessor on behalf of mankind, and thus to prepare the way for His second appearance without sin. In other words, the second coming completes the work of the first and, that work being completed, no more can be saved.

It will be noted how each of the considerations mentioned above—the exhaustion of the object of the Scriptures, the disappearing of the means of grace and with them the significance of the sealing ordinances of the Baptism and Communion, and finally the completion of the mediatorial work of Christ—adds cumulative evidence in support of the theory that at the time of the second coming there will be no further saving of souls and consequently that that coming will not take place until after the Millennium. We cannot say dogmatically that the theory is necessarily correct, for, as will subsequently be shown,

there are many considerations which can be advanced in favour of the opposite theory—that is, that the second coming will be pre-millennial ; but all must admit that the post-millennial theory is worthy of serious consideration by the seeker after light.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SECOND ADVENT IN THE LIGHT OF THE POST-MILLENNIAL THEORY

HOLDERS of the post-millennial theory assert that the kingdom of Christ is already in being, having formally commenced at the time of the Ascension. They hold further that the character and form of that kingdom will continue unchanged right down to the final Judgment. Those who favour the pre-millennial theory, on the other hand, hold that the kingdom will not begin until the second coming and the opening of the Millennium. We have here to consider the former view.

One of the chief reasons which led the Jews to reject the Messiah was that He was not the kind of king they expected. They looked for a king who would fulfil the prophecies which we now know had reference to the second appearance of Christ, or, as some hold, to the Gospel. Their minds were so preoccupied with the glories attending the second phase of Christ's kingship that they overlooked the prophecies which told them plainly that the king they were to expect was not a mighty prince, but a spiritual king, "lowly and riding upon an ass."

The Jews undoubtedly did look for the coming of the Messiah at the time of the first advent. All the prophecies told them that the time was near. Signs of the times were noted and eagerly discussed. Hence, when John the Baptist announced that the Messiah was coming, thousands flocked to hear him from all

parts of the country. As a result of his preaching there was a vast revival of the religious spirit. Christ's ministry, therefore, began under the most auspicious circumstances. The Baptist publicly acknowledged that He was indeed the King of whom he had preached. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Crowds followed in His footsteps, eagerly watching for the first sign of the might which they expected Him to reveal.

Gradually it dawned upon them that this was not the king they were looking for, the great one who was to revive the glories of Israel. Disappointment merged into chagrin, chagrin into hate. In their blind rage they looked upon Christ as an impostor, to be destroyed at all costs, by fair means or foul.

They sent Christ to the cross. But in so doing they did not destroy Him as they believed they were doing. They laid the foundation stone of that very kingdom of which He and the Baptist had preached as being at hand. And this is the burden of all writings of the apostles to the Jews. They told them that they had misread the Scriptures, that the kingdom they expected was not an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual, and that its king was not to dispense worldly glories, but grace and salvation. "Men and brethren, let me speak freely unto you of the patriarch David. . . . Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ. . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord

and Christ" (Acts ii. 29-36). In these words Peter states clearly that God's promise to David was fulfilled in the Resurrection, and that Christ's first act as King was to send down the Holy Ghost as affirming His present lordship or royalty.

Peter obviously wished it to be understood by the Jews that the only King whom they were to expect was already enthroned and dispensing far greater glories than any earthly monarch could have in his power to give to his subjects.

The apostle's words are also in complete accord with the spirit of the prophecy of Zechariah: "Behold the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." The words "priest upon his throne" exactly describe Christ's present kingship; as king he dispenses grace, and as priest he intercedes before the Father. This apt simile of the priest upon the throne recalls the words used in the Book of Revelation: "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth."

From the Apocalypse it is also clear that Christ regarded Himself as seated upon the throne of David, before His second advent. "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out

no more " (Rev. iii. 7-12). The reference to the key of the house of David recalls the words of Isaiah when he tells that the government would be put in the hands of Eliakim because of the remissness of Shebna. "The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder : so he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open " (Isa. xxii. 22). Hence Christ's use of the same words in regard to His position after the Ascension shows that He regarded Himself as exercising the authority typified in the key. In other words, that the house of David, with Christ as its ruler, is the Church under His administration. The more the passage is studied the more clear its significance becomes. Thus, "he who overcometh " is to be admitted not merely to Christ's Church on earth, but, by virtue of His kingship, into the kingdom of heaven, from which none can entice him forth.

Peter again lays stress on the fact that the kingdom of Christ is already in being when he says : "The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up. . . . Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you ; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised up from the dead " (Acts iii. 13-15).

When asked why he persisted in disobeying the commands of the authorities and continuing to "teach in that name," Peter answered : "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree ; Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins " (Acts. v. 29-31). Again we notice the insistence on the fact that Christ is a Prince as well as a Saviour. And when it is remembered that the apostle was addressing Jews who were so preoccupied with their hope of an earthly

prince for their promised Messiah, the significance of his words becomes all the more emphatic.

In this connection another striking passage is that contained in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians: "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." From whatever point of view this passage is regarded, it is impossible to escape coming to the conclusion that in it Christ is regarded as actually reigning already—that is, before the second advent.

Part and parcel of the pre-millennial theory is the assumption that at the second coming, in other words at the beginning of the Millennium, the Resurrection and Judgment of the saints will take place. The saints who have died, we are told, will be raised, and those still living will be translated. The obvious objection to this is that if it be correct, then instead of myriads of saints being on the earth during the Millennium there will be none at all. At first sight, then, a more tenable view of the subject would appear to be the opposite one, which is held by the supporters of the post-millennial theory. These assert that at the second coming the whole Church of God will be made alive, the dead by resurrection and the living by transformation.

The very fact that, as has already been shown, the Church is to be absolutely complete at the time of the second advent is in itself a confirmation of this view. If the resurrection is to be effected in two or more stages at varying times after the advent, it cannot be said that the Church will be complete at that date. "But now is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. . . ."

But each in his order : Christ the first fruits ; and afterward they that are Christ's at His coming " (1 Cor. xv. 20-23). The word translated as " each " possesses a sense of completeness and might be better represented by two words, " each party." Hence the passage signifies that all who are Christ's, that is all who have won salvation as a result of all that was embodied in Christ's Resurrection, will in their turn be resurrected in one great harvest.

The Saviour's own words on the subject leave no room for doubt. " This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day " (John vi. 39, 40). " Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am ; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me " (John xvii. 9, 24). In both these passages it is apparent that the second coming and the whole resurrection are regarded by Christ as inseparable.

The post-millennialists further maintain that, just as all the saints will be raised from the dead in a body at the second coming, so also will all the wicked. The pre-millennialists, on the other hand, hold that the resurrection of the just will take place before that of the unjust.

In support of the post-millennial theory the following passages have been cited. " And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake ; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt " (Dan. xii. 2). Here the simultaneous resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked is obviously the only construction that can be put on the words of the prophet. But the

question is decided by Christ Himself when He says : " The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation " (John v. 28, 29). Such clear and concise statements need no comment. It is impossible to interpret them as meaning anything else than that there will be one resurrection of both just and unjust ; in short, that they are directly opposed to the pre-millennial theory that there will be two resurrections, one of the just and the other of the unjust, occurring at different times in the course of the Millennium. Moreover, we are told that the sign for the resurrection will be the sounding of a trumpet or a voice, never the sounding of two trumpets or two voices or a trumpet at one time and a voice at another. Whatever the agent may be, it is always described in the singular, or where several means are signified they are all represented as taking effect at one and the same time. " We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised " (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52) ; and " The Lord shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise " (1 Thess. iv. 16).

It will be noticed too, that the agent effecting the resurrection is always represented as a mighty sound, and it is impossible, if the words are to be taken at all literally, to conceive of a sound lasting throughout the duration of the Millennium as the pre-millennial theory would require.

With regard to the mighty sound of the last trump, it is interesting, in passing, to recall the Hindu conception of sound as the akasic or etheric basis of

the universe. While admitting that sound is conveyed by vibrations of the air, the Hindus contend that it is manifested by vibrations of the ether. This sound is inaudible in detail, but its synthesis is expressed in Nature by the "Kung," or Great Tone of the Chinese. This Great Tone is the fourth note of the diatonic scale, and any musician with the gift of absolute pitch can distinguish it in the hum of great cities and of the elements. As the last trump will not, for obvious reasons, be sounded on a literal trumpet, it may well be that it will be the Great Tone sounded by some mighty and universal phenomenon of Nature, such as a storm.

There is a passage in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation from which it is obvious that the resurrection will be simultaneous, and also that the judgment will immediately follow and be simultaneous also. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, stand before the throne; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." Here we have a picture of the whole human race, in its resurrection state, standing before the great white throne. The words "great and small" indicate absolutely every man, from the highest to the meanest. It is impossible to conceive of any being absent, hence the resurrection must be both simultaneous and universal.

But there is a further passage in the same chapter which at first sight seems to indicate the exact

opposite. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and whosoever had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

From this it would certainly seem that the pre-millennial view, that there are to be two resurrections, one of the just at the beginning of the Millennium, and the other of the unjust at the end of that period, was indeed correct and that all the considerations which have been advanced above must be based on some false foundation.

It is, however, strange that this is the only passage in the whole Scriptures in which this double resurrection with a thousand years intervening is directly announced. In spite of the vast number of passages relating to the subject, not one can be found which gives the slightest support to this solitary prediction. If only one announcement of this double resurrection was to be made it would be reasonable to expect that that announcement would be clear and admit of no difference of opinion concerning it. But this passage is not clear when it comes to be examined, as has been abundantly proved by the many volumes which have been written to show that the first resurrection refers to the original saints only, to the martyrs only, or to both.

As is well known, there are many passages in the

Gospels and in the writings of the apostles in which the word resurrection is obviously used in a figurative sense, and refers to a spiritual and not a bodily resurrection. It is quite possible, therefore, that such a sense is intended to be taken in this case. It will be noted too, that the "first resurrection" is mentioned together with the "second death." The second death is not the physical death, which is the first, but the spiritual death of the unjust alone. The first death all men must suffer, but if they suffer it for Christ, then will He exempt them from the second or spiritual death. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Again, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." And there are innumerable references in the Bible to a man being "born again," which obviously refers to a spiritual and not a physical rebirth or resurrection.

A further justification for taking this "first resurrection" to be figurative and not literal is the fact that in the same passage it is expressly mentioned, and indeed emphasised, that those who take part in it shall not be subject to the second death. If the great physical resurrection were referred to by the words the addition of such an elementary truism would seem to be unnecessary. But if they refer to the spiritual resurrection enjoyed by all who truly believe on earth and in their mortal state, then the reference to the second death becomes obviously significant.

A number of other considerations could be brought forward, but enough has been said to indicate at least that this passage is not such an obstacle to the post-millennial theory that the resurrection is to be simultaneous and universal as might at first be supposed.

We now pass on to the Judgment which is the

immediate purpose of the second coming of Christ. If the pre-millennial view of a partial resurrection be correct, then the Judgment will of necessity be of an extended nature and will continue throughout the Millennium. The post-millennialists, on the other hand, hold that the just and the unjust will be judged together and both at the second coming of Christ. There are many passages in the Bible which plainly support this view. For instance, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32). The time at which Christ will confess and deny these two classes is obviously that "when He cometh in the glory of the Father, with the holy angels." "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work is." "For the Son shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works." The parable of the unwise virgins also clearly indicates that both classes are to be judged together and at the "coming of the Bridegroom." And there is nothing in the parable of the talents to show that on his return the lord of the house rewarded the faithful servants first and after a time "cast the wicked and slothful into outer darkness."

Christ's own words on the subject are equally clear. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto those on His right hand, Come,

ye blessed . . . Then shall He say unto them on His left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed . . . and these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 31-46). The continuous and complete nature of the Judgment no less than the fact that it is to take place immediately upon the second coming is also insisted upon in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles and burn them; but gather the wheat into My barn . . . So shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." If this passage means anything, it is that at the second coming the whole of the wicked shall be immediately judged, leaving the righteous to shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father.

The apostles are no less decisive on the point, as is shown in the following typical passage, with its alternating references to the just and unjust in connection with the Judgment. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and for immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory,

honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ " (Rom. ii. 5-16).

After the Judgment there will come the Great Conflagration which will destroy heaven and earth. " But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up. Nevertheless we according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness " (2 Pet. iii. 10-13).

The pre-millennial view of this mighty event is that it will take place after the Millennium, that is some thousand years after the second advent. The post-millennialists hold that it will take place at the very time of Christ's second coming. That there is strong Scriptural evidence in favour of the latter view is obvious from the passage quoted above.

The Bible, then, affords abundant support for the post-millennial view of the second advent. According to that view the great event towards which all the Scriptures turn will be the signal for the immediate end. Simultaneously with the coming of Christ in all His glory, the last awful events will take place; there will be a general and complete resurrection, the just and unjust will be judged together, and the great catastrophe which is to herald the dawn of a new heaven and a new earth will destroy what we call the Solar System. Whatever may be said against this view, it cannot be denied that its sweeping and comprehensive swiftness is an apt expression of the awful nature of those last dread days.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE POST-MILLENNIAL VIEW OF THE MILLENNIUM

As might be expected from the complete variance of the views of the post-millennialists and the pre-millennialists with regard to the time and nature of Christ's second coming, their theories in connection with the Millennium are equally opposed one to the other. The latter hold that the Millennium will begin with the second coming and that the promised conversion of the world will be effected by means of manifestations of divine power by Christ. As has also been noted, they affirm that the "kingdom of Christ" will be His actual reign over the earth during the millennial period.

The post-millennialists, on the other hand, assert that the conversion will be effected by means of the agencies for salvation already at work in the world. If this view be correct, the Millennium will not be ushered in with miracles, but the present era will imperceptibly merge into the "thousand years." As has already been seen above, there is no reference in the Scriptures to any means of grace, other than those now existing, becoming available until the end of the world. This, then, would support the post-millennial theory of the Millennium. The means now existing are the Bible and all that it signifies. None can doubt its efficacy and power. The fact that the world has not yet been converted is not the fault of the Bible, but the fault of man. His innate

stubbornness of heart has blinded him to the glories of the Word. And those who have in some degree appreciated the worth of the Word have preached and born witness to it with imperfect understanding and incomplete faith. But the Bible, the written word of the Spirit, is quite sufficient to convert all mankind when the "time to favour Zion comes" and man is given the grace to read, mark, and learn with understanding. To say that miracles are necessary to convert the world is to disparage the efficacy of God's Word. On the other hand, the post-millennialist's vision of a quickened Church preaching and spreading the true Gospel among all peoples and a greater receptivity among men is one of the most sublime and encouraging prospects ever placed before the faithful.

A necessary corollary of this view, however, is that the Millennium will not be a time of unmixed righteousness. It will be an earthly state stripped of its earthliness, a mortal and not a glorified state. On this point, light is shed by the vision of King Nebuchadnezzar, recorded in the Book of Daniel. The prophet's interpretation gives the key to the problem. "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon the feet of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then were the iron and the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

The stone cut without hands is universally accepted

as representing the kingdom of Christ which began during the continuance of one of the great world-empires signified by the image, Rome. The career of the stone is therefore the career of the kingdom of Christ. There are evidently two states to that kingdom, first the little stone which attacks the huge image, and second the vast mountain before which the image has vanished and which fills all the earth. But although there are these two states there is no change in the stone, at the end it is still the same stone. It has grown, but has not changed its character.

This description of the kingdom of Christ, as starting from a very small beginning and developing into a mighty thing out of all seeming proportion, was used by the Saviour Himself. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed . . . which is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake He to them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt. xiii. 31-33).

The difference between these parables and the prophet's interpretation of the vision is that the parables do not indicate the change which will take place in the extent of Christ's kingdom as a result of the fall of the antichristian powers, signified in the vision by the image. Up to the fall of those powers—that is, until the time of the Millennium—the kingdom will be but a little stone compared with the great metallic image of unbelief. But after the fall of the powers—that is, during the Millennium—it will be as a mountain filling all the earth.

But the image is annihilated by the attack of the stone and of nothing in addition to the stone, which emerges from the conflict infinitely increased in size,

but unchanged in composition. Hence the Millennium is brought about by the resources and agencies of salvation at present at work in the world. The opening of the Millennium will not be marked by miracles and other marvels, and the only observable difference will be that faith will be as common then as it is rare to-day.

The Millennial triumph, therefore, must be regarded as a spiritual triumph and not a material. This is wholly in accordance with the tenor of the Scriptures. "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." "We do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; behold thy King cometh unto thee. . . . And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak peace to the heathen, and His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the end of the earth." These last words of Zechariah, with their reference to the heathen, have a special significance, for they show that during the Millennium there will be infidels as well as believers, and that the conversion will not be so utterly complete as some pre-millennialists assert.

In the seventh chapter of the Book of Daniel there is another vision recorded which throws light on the Millennium. This second vision was given to the prophet himself and not to Nebuchadnezzar. In this vision the antichristian powers are represented as four wild beasts. The fourth power, Rome, is perpetuated in the Papacy, represented by the little horn of the fourth beast. According to the vision, the Church—that is, the Christian community—suffers more from this ecclesiastical form of the Roman

Empire than from all the kingdoms into which that empire was dissolved or even from Pagan Rome itself. This head of the apostasy "speaks great words against the Most High, and wears out the saints of the Most High, and they are given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of times," at the end of which period this antichristian oppressor of the Church is judged, condemned, and destroyed. The saints, thus delivered, obtain possession of the earth.

The difference between these two visions is one of point of view. Nebuchadnezzar was a king, hence the symbolical kingdoms appealed strongly to his mind. The prophet was not interested in kingdoms, but, as a man of God, thought more of spiritual affairs. Hence just as the attention of the king was attracted by the career of the kingdoms in his vision, so that of the prophet was riveted by the picture of the saints being oppressed by the beasts. Both visions therefore represent the same thing—the career of the Church of Christ. The first gives the date at which it arose, the second indicates its character. In the one the Church breaks the other kingdom; in the other the saints possess the kingdom for ever. Each vision is thus a history of the two parts of the kingdom of Christ—the period before the Millennium, when the saints are few and oppressed, and the Millennium, when the saints are supreme on the earth.

Turning to the Apocalypse, we find a picture of the triumph of the Church, represented in the visions by the triumph of the stone and the saints. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The sovereignty of the world hath become our Lord's and His Christ's; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15).

It will be noted that, whereas the conflict between

the stone and the image in the vision of the King is represented as a trial of might, that between the saints and the beast in the prophet's vision is represented as a trial of right. The stone broke the image, but the saints do not conquer the beast. The beast is judged, found to be an impostor, and his dominion is taken away from him and given to the saints. The facts that the beast is judged and that the paraphernalia of the judgment are similar to that represented elsewhere as appertaining to the Great Judgment have led some to jump to the conclusion that the prophet's vision refers to that great event at the end of the world. But this is obviously not the case. That Judgment will be a judgment of individuals, as is abundantly proved by every Scriptural reference to it, and not a judgment of a party or system such as is represented by the beast.

Moreover the prophet's vision has nothing to do with the second advent. He expressly states that the Son of Man, after the judgment on the beast, comes not to earth, but to God, and claims the dominion of the world, which is accorded to Him. He rules then, but "in the midst of His enemies."

It follows from the consideration of the two visions that the victory over the Antichrist will be a gradual process and that the final triumph will be spiritual and not material. The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, its victories must therefore belong to the world of the spirit and not of the flesh. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal"; neither, therefore, can the warfare itself be carnal. If this view be correct, then there may be wars and rumours of wars, but the great battle of Armageddon will be a spiritual conflict and not a battle such as is fought between two earthly powers.

One of the chief events of the Millennium will be the "binding of Satan." "And I saw an angel come

down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. xx. 1-3).

It is doubtful if this is to be taken literally as indicating a period during which there will be a total cessation of Satanic influence. The above passage is the only one in the whole course of the Scriptures which hints at any such event, which would seem to be of sufficient importance to be emphasised in other portions, and, from the fact that it occurs in the Book of Revelation, the whole tenor of which is symbolical, it is necessary to guard against accepting a literal interpretation without very good reason. There are three passages in the New Testament which help us to solve this problem. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 8). "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15); and "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20). The meaning of these three passages is obvious. The destruction of Satan referred to is not the actual extinction of the Evil One, but the destruction of his power over mankind. Previous to Christ that power was absolute, but after Christ man was freed from his bondage and could attain life through regeneration.

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation there is a

description of the war in heaven as a result of which the dragon and his angels were cast out into the earth. "And I heard a voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony." Satan and his supporters were thus ejected from heaven through the efficacy of the "blood of the Lamb"; it was therefore a spiritual triumph of light over darkness. And the joyful words proclaiming the coming of salvation and the kingdom of God do not mean that these things then began in heaven, but that, now relieved of the necessity of continually warring against the menace of Satan and his satellites, these things now took upon themselves a marvellous growth and freedom.

Is it not reasonable to assume that the binding of Satan is a similar event? Satan cast from heaven to earth with his angels forms a party there which continually harasses those who believe in the Lamb and hinders salvation among men. At last, after a long struggle, the blood of the Lamb proves its efficacy on earth as it has already done in heaven. Satan and his angels are recognised for what they are and they are cast forth from the enjoyment of the power they have managed to acquire. They will still exist and still have their followers, but they will be bound and powerless to hinder the work of salvation.

According to this theory, then, the Apocalypse is to be regarded as symbolising spiritual events. The great happenings leading up to the Millennium will not be worldly wars and struggles, but spiritual, and will result in the bloodless triumph of the Spirit. The Millennium will be a time when truth will be universally diffused: "The earth shall be full of the

knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the bed of the sea" (Isa. xi. 9). All mankind will accept the true religion. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust" (Psa. lxxii. 8). The Millennium will be a time of peace. "He shall judge between the nations, and decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 4; Mic. iv. 3). From this it follows of necessity that the Millennium will be a time of great temporal prosperity, for human effort will no longer be misdirected towards fruitless things. "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us" (Psa. lxxvii. 6).

But the Millennium will be a mortal state, just as its generations will be mortal men. Towards the end of the period human frailty will assert itself. Prosperity will make men forgetful, it will weaken faith and strengthen the flesh. "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, for a little season, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to go to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Rev. xx. 7-9). In other words, there will be a great falling away; faith will wane and all its blessings will diminish with it. It is the old story of Israel and Judah over again: faith leading to prosperity, prosperity leading to forgetfulness. But the process is not to be continued indefinitely. The patience of the Lord is exhausted and the Great Day is at hand. He bursts in all His glory on the apostate world. The dead are raised. The tares are destroyed and the harvest of the Lord is gathered in.

CHAPTER XIX

WILL THE SECOND ADVENT BE BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM ?

CONSIDERATIONS of fairness render it necessary that we should carefully study the post-millennial theory which has been outlined in the preceding three chapters. That theory is essentially, although by no means necessarily, the theory of Rome, and, as will be seen in the following pages, we have a number of hard things to say concerning the Church over which the Pope rules. Practically every leading Protestant authority holds the opposite view, and pre-millennialism has always been one of the bulwarks of Protestantism. It behoves us, therefore, to look carefully into the views of our opponents, for the strongest faith is that which is built up on careful considerations and not on mere intolerance. In these days of hasty judgments, too many are apt to adopt a theory, not because they have studied other theories, found them wanting and rejected them, but because a particular point of view is held by somebody with whom they happen to agree on some other point.

Obviously one of the chief characteristics of the post-millennial theory is its extreme comfortableness. The Apocalypse is regarded mainly as a collection of spiritual symbolisms, and we are assured that the many terrible events which it describes will not turn out to be so unpleasant as might be expected at first, but will prove to be only spiritual. The Millennium

will be just a pious edition of the time in which we live. There is something disappointing in this, and it leads many to have an instinctive distrust of the theory in spite of the many undoubtedly strong considerations which can be urged in its support.

The chief objections against the post-millennial theory may be summed up under eight heads :

1. If the doctrine were true it would receive special prominence in the New Testament, particularly in the various Epistles. As will have been noticed, the main arguments in support of the theory are taken from the Old Testament and comparatively few from the Epistles.

2. The whole trend of the teaching of the New Testament as to the condition of the Church right up to the time of the advent is against the view of the Millennium which the post-millennial theory necessitates.

3. The advent and not the Millennium is everywhere referred to as "the hope of the Church" and the event for which all Christians are to watch.

4. There are numberless passages in the New Testament which favour the view that the advent and the beginning of the kingdom of Christ will be simultaneous.

5. The Apostolic Church was pre-millennialist.

6. The same belief was held by the Church long after the time of the apostles.

7. The repeated injunctions to watch for the advent is inconsistent with the idea of an intervening millennium.

8. All the great religious reformers have held the pre-millennial point of view. Indeed it was not until less than two centuries ago that the post-millennial theory was first seriously suggested.

There were never three more earnest students of the Scriptures than Luther, Melancthon, and John Knox, and each of them was an uncompromising pre-

millennialist. Luther said: "Some say that before the latter days the whole world shall become Christian. This is a falsehood forged by Satan." Melancthon was of the opinion that "the true Church will always suffer persecution from the wicked." Writing on the subject of the likelihood of the millennial state being attained before the advent, Knox says: "It never was and never shall be, till the righteous King and Judge appear for the restoration of all things."

How small is the chance of the millennium being brought about by the evangelisation agencies at work to-day is shown by the fact that, in spite of the colossal efforts of the missionary societies and other agencies, the increase of the heathen is more than seventy times as great as that of the converts to Christianity. It has been calculated that the Mohammedan and heathen population of the world has increased by over 200,000,000 during the last century and that during that time the number of converts was less than 3,000,000. The state of Europe to-day shows how vain is the dream of converting all mankind without the aid of some more efficacious means than those at present available. It is impossible to think of converting the untold millions of the heathen when the great so-called Christian nations are indulging in this orgy of materialism after they have enjoyed nearly two thousand years of uninterrupted Christian teaching. It is good to be an optimist, but it is dangerous to carry optimism to the point of wilful blindness.

From the Apocrypha and a whole mass of writings belonging to the first century of the Christian era it is quite clear that the apostles and their followers looked for an early return of Christ and were strong-pre-millennialists. For instance, the following passage from the Didache, which was certainly written at some date prior to A.D. 100, shows how strong was

that belief in the early Church : “ When lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate and betray and persecute one another, and then shall appear the world-deceiver as the Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall do iniquitous things which have never yet come to pass since the beginning. . . . And then shall appear the sign of the truth ; first the outspreading of heaven ; then the sign of the sound of the trumpet ; and third, the resurrection of the dead, yet not of all, but as it is said : The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven. . . . Watch, for your life’s sake. Let not your lamps be quenched nor your loins unloosed ; but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour in which the Lord cometh.”

It will be noticed that this expression of the views of the early Church differs in every point from those held by the post-millennialists.

Schaff, the greatest of all ecclesiastical historians, says : “ The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millennarianism, that is, the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years before the general resurrection and the judgment. . . . The Christian chiliasm is the Jewish chiliasm spiritualised, and fixed upon the second, instead of the first, coming of Christ. It distinguishes two resurrections, one before and one after the Millennium, and makes the millennial reign of Christ only a prelude to His eternal reign in heaven.”

In his “ Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire ” Gibbon also remarks that these doctrines were “ the reigning sentiment of all orthodox believers.”

It has been urged that these fathers of the early Church were very possibly wrong in some of their beliefs and that we at the present time are better

fitted to decide on these points than they were. This is doubtful, for these fathers lived and taught before corrupt doctrines had had time to make headway. John Wesley, whose devotion to the cause of truth none can deny, was of the opinion that the apostolic fathers were safe guides. "They were," he wrote, "contemporary with the apostles themselves. We cannot therefore doubt but that they deliver to us the pure doctrine of the Gospel; what Christ and the apostles taught, and what these holy men had themselves received from their own mouths. . . . Such reason have we to look on the writings of these holy men as containing the pure uncorrupted doctrine of Christ."

That the apostolic fathers held the doctrine of pre-millennialism is abundantly proved by their writings, many of which have been preserved. Barnabas, who introduced the converted Paul to the apostles, Hermas, Polycarp, Papias are but a few whose works leave no doubt as to the views they and their fellow-Christians entertained on this important point. It is the same with the fathers who succeeded them, the Ante-Nicene fathers as they are called from the fact that they wrote previous to the Council of Nice in the year A.D. 325. Thus Irenæus, "the light of the Western Church," wrote: "Then shall the Lord come from heaven in clouds, in the glory of the Father . . . bringing the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day."

It must be remembered that these men lived in those critical early days of the Church when to be a Christian was to be subjected to relentless persecution. As Gibbon says, the pre-millennial doctrine held by these fathers and their followers "was productive of the most salutary effect upon the faith and practice of the Christians." It enabled them to endure persecution and martyrdom, and, in spite of the fiercest

opposition, to carry on the most vigorous missionary activity that the Church has ever known.

But with the conversion of Constantine came the corruption of the Church. Persecution ceased and a period of prosperity set in. The Church became allied with the State and dependent upon it. The old sturdy simplicity which had willingly endured all for Christ disappeared ; rites and ceremonies were introduced, and worldly honours and wealth were given to those who but a short time before had known nothing but persecution. Christians, as it were, came down from heaven to earth. John Wesley sums up the position as follows : " Constantine's calling himself a Christian, and pouring a flood of wealth and honour upon the Christian Church, the clergy in particular, was productive of more evil to the Church than all the ten persecutions put together."

On the strength of his conversion Constantine has been acclaimed as a saint. In reality he was nothing of the sort. He was a time-server, anxious only for power, and unscrupulous as to the means he adopted for obtaining it. It is difficult to imagine a saint who would order his own wife and son to be put to death, and for no special reason.

The decay of the Church was rapid. In 373 the Council of Rome formally threw over the writings and doctrines of the Apostolic and Ante-Nicene Fathers and the Church generally known as the Roman Catholic may be said to have started at that date. Soon it produced men of the stamp of Augustine, who introduced that system of persuasion which afterwards developed into the horrors of the Inquisition. In the time of Augustine many were, indeed, burnt at the stake by so-called Christians, for holding the same pre-millennial doctrines which had supported the early fathers in all their tribulations.

But although the primitive faith and doctrines were

expelled from Rome, they still continued to have their adherents who were willing to endure persecution for the sake of truth. The Waldenses and the Paulicians had received their faith direct from the early fathers, and they preserved the primitive beliefs with remarkable purity, and thus prepared the way for the Reformation.

This state of affairs has continued ever since. Rome has never reverted to the doctrines of the early fathers, has done everything in her power to stamp those doctrines out. But every Protestant Church and body has returned to those doctrines, included in which is that of pre-millennialism. Post-millennialism was not even thought of until after the Church had become an appanage of the State and had become corrupted with worldliness. Post-millennialism was the invention of those who also invented the Inquisition, the system of indulgences whereby a man could buy the Church's blessing on any sin he cared to commit, and many other institutions which it is impossible to associate with the true religion of Christ.

The pre-millennialist theory, on the other hand, has been held by practically every man of eminence outside the Church of Rome, and has appealed to such acute minds as those of John Napier, the inventor of logarithms, Sir Isaac Newton, "the world's greatest mathematician," and Michael Faraday, who practically founded the science of electricity.

From the above considerations it is clear that, however plausible the post-millennial theory can be made to appear, it must nevertheless have some very grave defects. The theory which originated in such suspicious circumstances and has been rejected by so many truly Christian men is not one to be hastily accepted as the truth.

Before considering the pre-millennial theory in the

light of the Scriptures it may be convenient to summarise the chief features of the theory. These features are :

(1) There will be a resurrection of the bodies of the saints before the Millennium ;

(2) Christ will return to the earth before the Millennium ;

(3) The devil will be excluded and Christ and His saints will rule over the world during the Millennium ;

(4) The wicked will be raised from the dead at the end of the Millennium.

For the proof of these the pre-millennialists depend on the literal interpretation of the Scriptures. This of course, is entirely opposed to the post-millennial method of interpretation. As has already been shown, the latter theory depends mainly on the spiritual interpretation. It may be urged, in favour of taking a literal interpretation, that the Scriptures are of little practical use unless they mean what they say. To spiritualise them tends to dissolve all the facts in a sea of Symbolism by means of which practically any theory can be proved. As an example of this attention may be called to the number of different and more or less plausible symbolical interpretations which can be drawn from the vision of Nebuchadnezzar recorded in the Book of Daniel. It will be remembered that quite a number of such interpretations have been referred to in the first part of this volume. The danger of Symbolism is that it can be used to twist the Scriptures into agreement with man's prejudices and false views. Highflown language is all very well for poetic flights of fancy, but the truth is best expressed in plain, sober prose.

No prophecies could be more obscure than those relating to the first coming of Christ. Only think what some of our modern symbolical interpreters could make of a passage predicting that a child shall

be born of a pure virgin, or that a mortal should not see corruption, if they had but the chance. But we know that all those prophecies were literally fulfilled. Why, then, should not the prophecies relating to the second advent receive a like fulfilment, in spite of their apparent obscurity? Christ Himself said to the eleven disciples: "These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me" (Luke xxiv. 44).

True, it is well to remember that what we have in words is only a translation of the Bible. Nevertheless, there is an obvious safety in holding fast to the literal interpretation. If we assume that Christ knew what He meant to say, and how to express what He meant, then we cannot distort His meaning to fit in with our prejudices.

If we admit these things, then we have only to take the literal meaning of the various prophecies relating to the second advent to see that that advent will be before the Millennium, which period will be a time when Christ personally rules on earth. For instance, the following passages from the Old Testament indicate the pre-millennial advent and the character of Christ's reign over the world: "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem" (Zech. xiv. 4). "The Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. xiv. 9). "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. ii. 11). "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 4). "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall

lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together ; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox ” (Isa. xi. 6). “ The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ” (Hab. ii. 14). “ I know that my Redeemer shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ” (Job. xix. 25). “ All the kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him ” (Psa. lxxii. 11).

We now come to matters of detail. “ And I saw an angel come down out of heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled ” (Rev. xx. 1-3). It will be remembered that, according to the post-millennial theory, this binding of Satan is merely a long process of evangelisation which results in the conversion of mankind and their emancipation from the power of the Evil One. In view of the present state of the world it is impossible to hazard a guess as to the number of centuries necessary to accomplish this process. If the present day represents the result of two thousand years of Christianity, how many thousands will it not require to convert all the heathen and the careless ? But this slow process is wholly contrary to the spirit of the prophecy, which gives the impression of a quick, sharp struggle. The descent of the angel, the seizing of the devil, the binding and casting him into the pit, do not in the least suggest anything except an actual struggle which is quickly completed. To apply such words

to a long and gradual process would be to distort not only their literal meaning, but their figurative sense as well.

The pre-millennialists hold that the resurrection will be universal, but not simultaneous. The just will be raised from the dead first and immediately before the millennium ; the wicked will not be resurrected until a thousand years later. Again, all they need in support of their belief is the literal acceptance of the prophecy. " I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them ; and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection " (Rev. xx. 4-6).

This plain and straightforward statement is avoided by the post-millennialists, by suggesting that it is the only passage in the Bible which refers to such an event. Consequently they spiritualise the passage into meaning the conversion of the just in their ordinary earthly lives. This would certainly appear, to any who approach the question with an open mind, to be carrying a zeal for symbolism to excess. It is the first step towards the mistakes of Origen and the other expositors of the early Roman Church, who spiritualised the whole of the Old Testament and asserted that Moses never lived, but was an abstraction used to symbolise the law. Surely if this reference to the first resurrection is to be taken figuratively then so also must the reference, in the same chapter, to the second resurrection be regarded in that light. The eleventh and thirteenth verses read ; " And

I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it : and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them ; and they were judged every man according to his works."

No Christian doubts that this prediction of a second or general resurrection and judgment will be literally fulfilled in its broad outlines ; therefore it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the prophecy relating to the first resurrection of the just will also be literally fulfilled. The post-millennialists are forced to regard one statement as literal, the other as symbolical, simply because their theory would otherwise fall to the ground—an arbitrary procedure, to say the least of it.

It has been objected that the passage in the twentieth chapter of Revelation is the only one which mentions the first resurrection as distinct from the general one, in anything like clear language. It is true that there is no other passage in which the matter is stated with such clearness, but the intelligent reader will agree that the whole trend of the Bible is pre-millennial. Thus, " Then shall He send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other " (Matt. xxiv. 31). And in the parable of the ten virgins which is related in the following chapter of St. Matthew we are told that the five wise virgins were taken and the others left. These two and many other passages are quite

in keeping with the theory of a first resurrection of the just before the Millennium. Could any one read the following words and not come to the conclusion that two separate events were referred to?—"For the hour is coming when all that are in the earth shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 29).

The post-millennialists assert that the "first resurrection" of Rev. xx. 5 and 6 must be taken as referring to the spiritual life of the just in heaven after death. But in that case it would not be a resurrection at all, but a translation from one state to another.

The kingdom of God has been described thus: "In its fullness, it is past, it is present, it is to come; it is inward and spiritual existing now, it is outward and visible, yet to exist; it is heavenly; it is a kingdom of grace; it is a kingdom of glory; it is earthly; it is temporal; it is everlasting. In its forms it is many, in its essence it is one. It has various dispensations. It is above, it is below, and, in its highest consummation, is the realisation of the Will of God on earth as it is now realised in heaven; a consummation begun below, developed in the age to come, and completed in the eternal state. We cannot wonder, therefore, at the ardour of the early Christians in their hope of the advent, the resurrection of the righteous, the coming kingdom and glory, and on this very earth." Every one of these aspects of the kingdom and the Millennium is mentioned in the Bible; and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that many, including the post-millennialists, should have but a partial view of its glories. Viewed piecemeal, the kingdom is a mass of inconsistencies, but regarded as a whole it is a vision of harmonious glory.

Even the most bigoted optimist cannot be blind to

the fact that there are no signs that this kingdom is being brought about by the means of grace already available. The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth"; but man is a free agent, and he believes or not as he pleases. No amount of preaching will force a man to believe if he has not the desire to believe. Consider the present state of Europe in spite of centuries of preaching of the Gospel. Germany has had the advantage of the preaching of Martin Luther and a thousand others scarcely less godly. Yet she has hardened her heart against their words of wisdom and is now sunk in the grossest materialism, the materialism of blood and iron. And Britain cannot boast. Within recent years she has been blessed with a number of pious and eloquent men who have preached the true religion of Christ with splendid force and fervour. But they have received scant attention. The increase of divorce is about five times the increase of the population. The law is forced to grapple with increased immorality and drunkenness. Women have flung aside modesty in dress and manners. Not one man in 10,000 professes to take the slightest interest in religion. They troop by the hundred thousand to see a football match, and they throng to music-halls, but there is always plenty of room in the churches and chapels. The demand for new picture palaces is seemingly inexhaustible, but there is practically no demand for new places of worship.

And it is the same in the outside world. In spite of the devoted efforts of the many missionary societies Christianity cannot keep pace with the growing flood of Mohammedanism and other false religions.

But this does not mean that the Gospel has been a failure. It tells us itself that we are not to expect it to revolutionise the world. "Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"

(Matt. vii. 14). "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxii. 14). The world is still under the domination of the Evil One, but in spite of all his wiles and efforts, millions have thrown off his yoke and won salvation through the Gospel. Those who will be sufficiently blessed to "have part in the first resurrection" will be able to see for themselves that the Gospel has not been a failure, but a most glorious triumph.

It will be remembered that the post-millennialists bring forward the parables of the leaven and the mustard seed to support their theory. These parables, however, do not provide very satisfactory evidence, for they can be shown to possess an exactly opposite meaning to that which the post-millennialists seek to impose upon them. Neither of these parables was explained by Christ or any of the apostles; we are left to form our own judgment as to their meaning. The post-millennialists say that the leaven is the Gospel and that the parable proves that it will in time win over the whole world to righteousness. But does the leaven signify the Gospel? In every other passage in the Scriptures where it is used symbolically it is utilised to denote corruption. For instance, "the leaven of the Pharisees" and the "leaven of the Jews." Salt is the symbol usually taken to denote righteousness. Modern science, too, tells us that leaven is indeed a rank poison containing all manner of harmful bacteria, which, fortunately, perish in the process of cooking. Hence, it is not likely that our Lord would on this occasion alone use so inapt a simile for the Gospel, as a substance which if taken in an uncooked state, is poisonous. If, however, we regard the leaven as signifying unrighteousness, then the parable becomes quite clear. Unrighteousness will spread over the whole globe, as we see that it practically has done, and the salt, or

righteousness, will remain comparatively without influence on the huge mass with which it is mixed. There is, therefore, good reason for taking the parable as an indication that the Gospel is not destined to perform the miracles which the post-millennialists expect of it.

Again, the post-millennialists have evolved from the parable of the mustard-seed a pretty picture of the weary fowls of the air coming for rest and refreshment among the shady branches of the tree. Unfortunately, however, our Lord does not regard the birds in anything like the same humane spirit, as they will see if they read on for a few verses. These fowls of the air which the post-millennialists regard with such sentimentality are denounced as the wicked one, for they devour the seed scattered by the sower. In short, their rest among the luxuriant branches does not convert them into doves. A very different picture, and one more in keeping with the spirit of the discourse, is obtained by taking the mustard-tree to represent the Churches of the world, which started from a very small beginning and have developed into very splendid affairs. Do we not see many "fowls of the air" lodging in their branches? There is the political fowl, the commercial fowl, the financial fowl, the society fowl, and many other species of the bird, all of them nominally Christians, for no better reason than that it suits their worldly ambitions and greed to have a reputation for piety.

Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image is also used by the post-millennialists as a support for their theory, but it is no more satisfactory than the parables. They see in the victory of the stone kingdom the conversion of all mankind by means of the Gospel, a process which they admit must of necessity be slow. This would be splendid if only it fitted in with the vision as recorded in the Book of Daniel. If, how-

ever, we leave the generalisations of the post-millennialists and study the details of the vision we see that (1) the image is complete before it is touched ; (2) the stone smites the image immediately on its appearance ; (3) the feet, that is, the last form of human world-power, is attacked ; (4) the image collapses immediately ; (5) the metals are not converted into stone, but become as chaff and are scattered by the winds ; (6) the stone does not grow slowly, but expands into a mountain, immediately on the collapse of the image. Every one of these points militates against the theory that the vision represents the gradual conversion of mankind by means of the Gospel. On the other hand, they all fit in admirably with the pre-millennial theory that the stone denotes the second coming of Christ, who puts to flight the enemies of righteousness and so brings about the Millennium.

According to the post-millennial theory we are still many centuries away from the Millennium and presumably thousands of years away from the second advent. Indeed, in view of the fact that the heathen are increasing far more rapidly than the converts to Christianity, the post-millennialist finds himself in the paradoxical position of one who advances backwards. The nearer we approach the Millennium the less likely does its realisation by the accepted post-millennial methods become. And, as has already been shown in the first part of this volume, there is ample proof of the fact that the Millennium is very near.

The present great world-war is a shattering blow to the post-millennialists. On the other hand, it is in perfect accord with the views of the pre-millennialists. They look for a literal fulfilment of the prophecies and expect real wars and rumours of real wars with bloodshed in them. They hold that the Lord may indeed come at any moment, and the present state

of the world only increases their watchfulness. At His coming they look for unrighteousness to be swept from the face of the earth as the shattered image was swept away by the winds after the victorious onslaught of the stone that was cut without hands. The post-millennialists say that we may look forward to Christ's coming in about 2,000 years, and that there is no immediate need for watchfulness. The pre-millennialists cry, "Watch ! Watch with ever-increased vigilance ! For the hour is indeed at hand !"

CHAPTER XX

THE PRE-MILLENNIAL VIEW OF THE JUDGMENT

IN opposition to the post-millennialists, the pre-millennialists hold that the Judgment, like the Resurrection, will not be effected simultaneously on all, but that the righteous will be judged first and at the beginning of the Millennium.

On the sudden and generally unexpected advent of Christ, the living saints who will be awaiting His appearance will be caught up. Just as a magnet causes the iron filings to spring up to it, leaving the grit and other impurities behind, so will Christ cause His saints to spring up to Him. Thus will the saints be saved from the horrors which will mark the last short period during which the power of the Anti-christ will be rampant. This "catching up" of the righteous will, therefore, be some time before the actual advent so far as the rest of the world is concerned. It will coincide with the first resurrection and will be followed by the judgment of the righteous.

It may be remarked that, being righteous, they would not appear to need judgment. But the judgment of Christ will be something more than a judgment in the earthly sense of the word. It will be a vindication. The world has always been bitterly opposed to the righteous. It was hate that sent Christ to the cross, after a mockery of a trial. It was the world's inveterate hatred of righteousness that persecuted the early martyrs and the thousands who

have since perished for the sake of their faith, without being accorded a semblance of justice. Even to-day the words of St. Paul apply to the truly righteous: "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. 12, 13). The sufferings of the martyrs demand justice, which they shall receive, and before a far greater tribunal than ever this world has known.

And, in addition to vindication, the righteous will also receive their reward. The unrighteous have their reward here on earth, but the righteous will "be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." The rewards will vary and be in the strictest accordance with the dictates of justice. The widow who threw in her two mites will receive a reward greater than those who only gave of their abundance. The parables of the talents and the pounds indicate that the rewards will be commensurate with merit.

The righteous will also be appointed to fulfil their various posts and duties during the coming Millennium and judgment of the unrighteous. In the kingdom of Christ some will be great, others small; they will differ as "one star differeth from another star in glory." "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" asks Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands" (Rev. xx. 4). Hence the saints are to assist in the millennial judgments upon the world. "The Saints," says Wesley, "after being judged themselves, shall be assessors with Christ in

the judgment wherein He shall condemn all the wicked."

And what of the world? After the catching up of the saints it will rapidly degenerate. "There will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that time." "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7). All the evangelists are emphatic concerning the tribulations which mankind will suffer. Antichrist will fill the world with violence and bloodshed. And in the midst of it all Christ will return with His angels and saints.

Then will Antichrist be destroyed and the nations judged. "And before Him shall be gathered all the nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 32). "I will also gather all the nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat . . . for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about."

This judgment must not be confounded with the final judgment which is described in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. It is a judgment on nations, and not on individuals. It clears the world of evil and prepares it for the Millennium.

At the end of the Millennium, after the Evil One's short-lived return to power, there is the final judgment. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were

judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 11-15).

This is the final, the great Judgment, the scene of which is set in the realms of space. It is the wicked that have been resurrected for this Judgment, for the righteous have already been judged. The wicked, from the mightiest prince to the humblest beggar, will be arraigned. Small and great, they will all be there. The post-millennialists assert that the words "small and great" mean "the righteous and the unrighteous," but this is obviously a wrong assumption. At all times and among all peoples the words have always signified gradation of rank, and nothing else. If words such as these are to be twisted from their accepted meaning, there is no end to the theories which might not be proved by such means.

No human words can describe, or imagination depict, that last tremendous scene. On the one hand, there are the myriads of the angels and the hosts of the righteous, resplendent in glory, and on the other the vast multitude of the unrighteous cowering before the throne and speechless with fear. Their sentence is pronounced. There is no appeal. They turn from the glory of those whom aforetime they despised, and they troop to their eternal death.

"Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

CHAPTER XXI

HOW WILL CHRIST COME ?

WE have seen that nearly all the great Protestant divines and all the early fathers of the Church look for Christ to return to earth before the Millennium. There is, however, a good deal of diversity of opinion as to the exact manner of His coming. Nevertheless, without going too deeply into questions of detail, there is much in the Bible which throws light upon this subject.

In the first place, the return must be an actual personal return. There have been commentators who have asserted that the references to the return are all allusions to a great spiritual revival in the world ; that it will be a return of Christ in the spirit, and not in the flesh. But this cannot be admitted. There have even been apparently deeply religious men who have regarded the glories which are to attend the second advent as the marvels of twentieth-century civilisation. True, modern man can accomplish miracles compared with the achievements of his ancestors, but there is little that is spiritual about them. The glories which we associate with Christ's return are of a very different nature from wireless telegraphy and nitro-glycerine.

And there is something of disappointment in the idea of a spiritual and impersonal return of the Saviour. It seems to rob us of the greatest and truest friend we have ever had. Ever since the Ascension

the prospect of the personal return of Christ has been the most comforting support for the faith of His followers. The idea that He is really coming has deprived persecution of its terrors and enabled the faithful to remain steadfast, in spite of the scorn and hatred of the world. It is this strong and definite hope of a personal return that makes Christianity unique among the world's religions. No other religion possesses this intensely personal note. The heathen gods are mere abstractions, of whom it is impossible to conceive as concerned with the affairs and thoughts of their worshippers. But Christ, Son of God though He is, has walked on this earth, He has lived and suffered as one of ourselves ; there have been those who have touched the hem of His garment. And He is coming again ! What greater proof could we have of His infinite kindness and infinite interest towards us sinners ?

No man who reads the Bible with simple faith will be robbed of this glorious hope by those who seek to prove that the second coming will be impersonal. The first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles will settle the question for every true Christian. "And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven ? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye behold Him going into heaven." These words can mean nothing less than that Christ is to come bodily and visibly. He will return in the very same manner as He went up into heaven nineteen hundred years ago.

"So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin" (Heb. ix. 28). These words may not fit in with some of the theories which man has evolved, but they are plain literal statements which admit

of only one meaning. To ignore them or to attempt to explain them away is merely to juggle with the Word of God and to confess to a stubbornness of heart more perverse than that of the Jews. If the Bible teaches anything at all, it teaches us that we shall not merely feel Christ's spiritual presence, but shall be able to see Him as clearly and as actually as the disciples saw Him when He ascended into heaven. All will not actually see Him at once, for the earth is round, but all will be able to see Him just as was the case nineteen hundred years ago.

This visible and bodily coming will be in two distinct stages. The first will be as He comes in the air and the righteous are caught up to meet Him. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air " (1 Thess. iv.).

Many questions arise over this rapture of the saints, and it is difficult to pronounce with clearness upon them. Will the rapture be invisible and secret ? Will the world wake up one day to find a few Christians taken away and many left ; but no sound and nothing seen by all those who are left behind ? Many hold that such will be the case ; but there are many considerations to be urged against this view. In the first place, it will be noticed that the first resurrection, that of the righteous, will have already been accomplished at the time of the rapture. And the description of Christ's coming for His saints—"with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God"—gives the very opposite impression to one of secrecy. Moreover, the prophecies make no mention of a third advent, as would be the case if the rapture is secret and invisible and some considerable time

before the advent usually called the second coming. There was the first advent in order that Christ should suffer and die ; and there will be the second advent in order that He may rule and reign ; but there is never a mention of a secret coming in between these two events. Christ Himself likened His second coming to lightning that "cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west." He could have used no more forcible description of a sudden and universally recognised advent.

On the other hand, there are words of our Lord and also of Paul which would seem to hint that there will be a distinct period, and one of great tribulation, between the coming for the saints and the subsequent coming for the rest of mankind. "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass" (Luke xxi. 36) ; and, "For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work ; only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one" (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8).

Will all the righteous, or only a few, be caught up to meet Christ ? Will there be only a few "firstfruits," leaving the "harvest" of the righteous until the coming with the saints ? We are told that two men will be in a field ; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at a mill, and one shall be taken and the other left. "We that are alive that are left unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep . . . the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." From these words it seems clear that no one goes before the raising of the dead in Christ ; and that these righteous and the dead in Christ will be caught up together, and

at the same time, "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

The second stage of the advent will be when Christ comes to the earth. "The Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory ; and before Him shall be gathered all the nations " (Matt. xxv. 31) ; again, "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east ; and the Mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley ; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee by the valley of My mountains ; for the valley of My mountains shall reach unto Azel ; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah King of Judah ; and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with Him " (Zech. xiv. 4, 5).

From this last vivid description of the coming of Christ it is evident that He will be accompanied by His saints. Moreover, it will be with great publicity. There can be no two opinions as to the fact that this stage of the coming, at least, will have nothing of secrecy. The Saviour Himself laid stress on this point, and warned us against those who should proclaim a secret coming. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here ; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold I have told you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the wilderness ; go not forth. Behold, He is in the inner chambers ; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man " (Matt. xxiv. 23-27).

The state of affairs pictured by Christ is actually existing in the world to-day. The Christian Scientists believe that Mrs. Eddy, the founder of the sect, represented the coming of Christ. The Bahaists have gone to Persia to find Him. Many have declared and believe that the Master has appeared to them. We are even shown the turban which He left behind Him after appearing in a blue flame ! America has also produced many of these false Christs, who never fail to obtain a following.

When Christ first came to the world, He came as an insignificant babe and was laid in a manger. But at His second coming His divine power and glory will be apparent to every eye. "And they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30). Throughout the Scriptures the manifestation of Divinity is always accompanied by clouds. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud"; and, "Jehovah descended in a cloud and stood there." Again, "While He was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud saying, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus will the Son of Man come "in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Finally, He will come without warning and with dramatic suddenness. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. xvi. 15). By many this is taken to refer to His coming at the death of an individual; but it applies with equal force to the second advent, in connection with which the words "as a thief in the night" are constantly used. "For yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying Peace and Safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them,

as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall in no wise escape ” (1 Thess. v. 2, 3).

In spite of all the signs of the times, Christ will not find an expectant world. Everything will be going on the same as usual. “ And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall be the coming of the Son of Man ” (Matt. xxiv. 37, 39).

This utter unexpectedness is the one feature of the advent upon which all commentators agree. Just as the thief gives no warning to the householder, so will Christ give no warning to the world. It is for the Christian therefore to be always prepared. Never was that need of preparedness greater than at the present day. We have seen that the end is at hand, and that we may expect that the second advent will precede the Millennium. Those who wish to avoid the great tribulations which will mark the end must never fail in their vigilance for a moment. Now, if ever, can we say with literal emphasis, “ the hour is at hand.” If we fail, there will be no excuse, for our Saviour gave us the most distinct warning possible. “ Take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you as a snare : for so it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man ” (Luke xxi. 34, 36).

CHAPTER XXII

THE MILLENNIUM

THE twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation tells us that the saints will "live and reign with Christ a thousand years"; hence the long-looked-for Millennium. Throughout the whole Scripture there are many passages predicting that there will come a period of peace, holiness, and happiness when the Lord will reign over the heathen of the earth. It is continually prophesied that Israel will be converted and restored to divine favour and pre-eminence among the nations and that the Lord will be their prince. "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32). David's throne must obviously be a throne on this earth and quite distinct from that of the Father, on whose right hand Christ has been seated since the Ascension. The post-millennialists, of course, assert that all these references to the throne of David are symbolical, and that they signify the triumph of the Gospel. But there is no special reason why these prophecies should be denied a literal fulfilment, any more than thousands of others. Literally, the words refer to Christ and not to Christianity, therefore we have very good reason for believing that Christ will actually reign in person on the earth. This belief is strengthened when we remember the very strong

evidence in support of the theory that the second advent will take place before the Millennium, and will, in fact, usher in that period.

Putting aside all theories as to whether the British or any other people are the modern representatives of the ten lost tribes of Israel, there can be no doubt that the return and conversion of "all Israel" will be one of the greatest events connected with the return of Christ and the Millennium. The advent of Christ will occasion great joy among the chosen people. "It shall be said in that day," says Isaiah, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us; This is Jehovah, we have waited for Him. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." But this rejoicing will be preceded by a period of mourning. "And I will put upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart" (Zech. xii. 8).

But on the very day that Israel's sufferings and tribulations come to a culminating point Christ will deliver them. Again the prophet Zechariah describes the scene. "For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half the city shall go into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall Jehovah go forth and fight against those nations; as when He fought in the days of battle."

Previous to these events Israel will have been gathered from among all the nations of the earth.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Patros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hanath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa. xi. 11, 12). The first result of this gathering will be that the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah will unite after their long severance. “I will take the stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in My hand. . . . And I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and they shall no more be two nations.”

Doubt has been expressed as to whether it will be a physical possibility for all Israel to return to the land that was promised to their forefathers. In the first place, it is doubtful whether we are to take the return as signifying the return of every Jew and every Israelite to Jerusalem. There will be taken two of a family and one of a city. And in the second, it must be remembered that the promised land is much larger in extent than modern Palestine. The Israelites themselves never possessed it in its entirety. It will reach from the entering in of Hamath to the river of Egypt, doubtless the Nile, and will extend back to the Euphrates. To-day much of this area is desert and the rest is mainly desolate. But there is ample evidence that the whole country is remarkably fertile when it is properly irrigated and cultivated. The Nile barrages and the experiments of the various Jewish agricultural colonies prove

what can be done with the land and that it is possible to transform it into one of the most fertile and healthy tracts of land in the whole world. Besides, the prophets tell us that in point of fertility the country will be greater than it has ever been before. "And it shall come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and water the valley of Shittim" (Joel iii. 18). It is quite possible to allow that this and similar prophecies will have a literal fulfilment without in any way spoiling the beauty and force of the many allegories that have been built up on them.

At the time of the return, however, the vast majority of the children of Israel will still be unbelievers in the true religion of God. It is more than probable that many of them will ally themselves with the Antichrist. As a result of this they will suffer the most grievous afflictions that have yet been visited upon them. The desolations of the fall of Jerusalem and the tribulations of the succeeding centuries of persecution will be as nothing compared with the sufferings of these last days. "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Dan. xii. 2). "Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore will I gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you" (Ezek. xxii. 19, 20).

These tribulations culminate in the time of mourning; then, when the fortunes of the people seem to be at the lowest ebb, Christ will appear in all His

glory. Unbelief will be changed into faith, mourning into gladness. The oppressors will be defeated and destroyed. Judah will "be saved and Israel shall dwell safely."

At last Israel shall be the pre-eminent people of the earth. "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." The prosperity of the nation shall be unlimited. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; in the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be builded. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, whereas it was a desolation in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited" (Ezek. xxxvi. 33-36).

Jerusalem is to be the capital of the millennial kingdom of Christ. "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth; and the mountain of Jehovah of hosts, The holy mountain. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" (Zech. viii. 3-5).

In the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Revelation there is a description of "that great city, holy Jerusalem," of which we are told: "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner

of precious stones. The first foundation was of jasper ; the second, sapphire ; the third, a chalcodony ; the fourth an emerald ; the fifth, sardonyx. . . . And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ; every gate was of one pearl ; and the street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass." It is very doubtful, however, whether we are justified in regarding this as a picture of Jerusalem during the Millennium, even as a highly symbolical one. The description occurs after the final judgment and the destruction of heaven and earth. And many other considerations lead us to believe that the vision is not of the Jerusalem that we know, but of the New Jerusalem which will come with the New Heaven and the New Earth.

The direct result of the return of Christ and the overthrow of evil in the world will be the establishment of the millennial kingdom. There will be a full revelation of the glory of God. That glory has already been partially revealed in creation and in the life and ministry of Jesus ; but in the millennium "the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." During this time Christ will reign personally over the earth. "And I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He that sat thereon called Faithful and True ; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And His eyes are as a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems ; and He hath a name written which no one knoweth but Himself. . . . And out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations ; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron ; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. And He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

The saints will reign with Christ. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." "And He hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death shall have no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." There are three distinct classes of saints mentioned in the Scriptures. First there are those who "when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, shall also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." These are they who are mentioned in Revelation as "descending with Christ" and having judgment given unto them. Secondly there are those who shall be made "rulers over many things" and shall "have authority over five or ten cities." These are they who have been "beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God"; in other words, the martyrs and those who have suffered persecution. Finally, there is the great body of the righteous, those "who had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads." These are the faithful servants referred to in the sixteenth chapter of Luke. They shall possess, not that which was entrusted to them for a whole, but that which is their own.

As a result of the conversion of Israel spiritual knowledge and holiness will spread far and wide over the world. "Israel shall blossom, and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6). "Many people shall go up and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths" (Isa. ii. 3). Those words show how great will be the change that

will come over the world. At the present time, in spite of much devoted evangelisation work, the Word of God penetrates but little into the hearts of men. They do not want to hear it, but to be left to pursue their carnal ambitions and desires, without having their consciences stirred. But in the days of the Millennium men will no longer be hard of heart ; they will come of their own accord and will seek the truth. No longer presumptuous and arrogant because of the little learning they have managed to acquire, they will become as children, willing, nay eager to learn and receive the blessings of truth.

Thus will Christ's kingdom constantly expand, as was foretold by Isaiah ; " Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David." From all parts of the earth men shall come to gaze at the glory of Christ and to follow Him. " I will gather all nations and tongues ; and they shall come and see My glory " (Isa. lxvi. 18). And to those who do not or cannot come Christ will send messengers to tell of the great things that have come into the world. " And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, nor seen My glory ; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles " (Isa. lxvi. 19).

All these things must not lead us to fancy that wickedness will cease to exist on the earth during this marvellous period. There will still be the unrighteous to prepare the way for the loosing of the Evil One at the end of the Millennium. But instead of being in the vast majority, as at present, these unrighteous will be in the minority. They will slink away from the sight of the righteous, but as soon as they are found they will be punished.

“Morning by morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land; to cut off all the workers of iniquity from the city of the Lord” (Psa. ci. 8). Then, as now, many will not be sincere in their acceptance of Christ. “The strangers shall yield feigned obedience unto Me” (Psa. xviii. 44). These will be constantly falling away and resuming their old sinful ways, and hence will have to be punished.

The Millennium therefore will not be a period of perfect peace, as is commonly assumed. Satan will be bound and man will be free of his wiles and deceptions. But man will not be equal to this trial. The innate wickedness of the flesh will manifest itself and man will not be wholly cured of his spiritual blindness and perversity. In spite of all the glory of Christ’s visible reign on earth, in spite of all the blessings that the world will enjoy during that time, and in spite of the judgments which will be continually visited upon the unrighteous, there will still be many to welcome Satan when he is unloosed as the final test of man. They will be as ready to be deceived by him and to follow him as they are to-day. But they will no longer be allowed to impose upon God’s mercy and patience. Since the days of Adam He has been constantly encouraging and teaching man to be righteous. He has sent His Son among men as a man, but few have accepted Him. He will send His Son again, this time as a King, and in the full glory of His divinity, and those who still refuse to serve Him will be destroyed as they deserve.

Then will come the new heaven and the new earth, and the saints will rejoice in the wondrous eternal perfection of which we obtain a glimpse in the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation.

CHAPTER XXIII

BABYLON AND ROME

THE Apocalypse, dealing wholly with the future and written in highly symbolical language, is obviously the most difficult and at the same time the most fascinating portion of the Scriptures to interpret. The innumerable interpretations and deductions that have been based on this last short Book of the Bible is sufficient proof of the extreme care needed if we wish to tread its paths with anything approaching certainty. At first it might appear to be an utterly hopeless proposition. It seems so vague and shadowy and tangled that it might well be believed that it is impossible to obtain a clear view of even an inch of solid ground before us. And yet the Apocalypse, no less than any other portion of the Scriptures, was given to us for a purpose, "that he may run who readeth it."

It is a remarkable fact and splendid proof of the divine inspiration of the Bible that the Scriptures form one harmonious whole. Those who study it diligently are continually finding passages which throw light on other passages, the meaning of which has hitherto eluded their grasp. The words of one prophet are continually helping us to interpret the words of another. Viewed separately each is a mystery on which it would be dangerous to pronounce dogmatically ; but viewed as a whole we get a hint here and a hint there which enable us to discover the key to these riddles.

Much harm has been done in the past by the hasty interpretation of the prophecies, by jumping to unjustifiable conclusions, and by following false processes of reasoning and research. We may apply to many earnest but misguided interpreters of prophecy the words which Francis Bacon applied to the scientists of his day. "The sole cause and root of almost every defect of the sciences is this, that while we falsely admire and extol the powers of the human mind we do not search for its real helps. The speculations and theories of mankind are but a kind of insanity, only there is no one to stand by and observe it. We must bring men to particulars and make an instauration from the very foundations if we do not wish to revolve for ever in a circle, making only some slight and contemptible progress."

It is the same with the prophecies contained in the Word of God; we must abandon dogmatic speculation, however pleasing this may be to our pride, and humbly search for the real guidance which God has given us to enable us to comprehend His meaning. We must study the prophecies which God has already interpreted for us before we venture to pronounce on those on which He has remained silent.

The Old Testament is the pathway to the New. It prepares for and explains much that is to come. From the birth of Jesus down to the present day everything has happened as the prophets foretold. Especially is this intimate relation of one book with another apparent when we come to study the Books of Daniel and Revelation. The one is the sequel to the other. Of these two books Sir Isaac Newton wrote: "The Apocalypse of John is written in the same style and language with the prophecies of Daniel, and hath the same relation to them which they have to one another, so that all of them together make but one complete prophecy." Each relates

to the same subject and discusses it in the same language; each unfolds the same story, the great story of the end.

It may be remarked in passing that the Book of Daniel holds a unique position in the Scriptures. Previous to it all the prophets are taken up with the chosen people and their destinies, but with Daniel comes a change. The prophecies now begin to refer to the Gentiles, and the great events of the Christian dispensation are foreshadowed. Thus Daniel and the Apocalypse are the Alpha and Omega of the prophecies of the Gentiles.

Taking the two books together, we find that there are seven symbolic prophecies contained in them for which the correct interpretation is divinely given.

There is, first of all, the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image. The fact that the vision is interpreted for our benefit is emphasised by the context. Only five verses are given to the vision, while no less than ten are devoted to the interpretation, which opens with the significant words: "We will tell the interpretation thereof to the king." The fact that the interpretation is correct is vouched for by the concluding words: "The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

The details of the vision have already been mentioned in the course of this work, and also a number of interpretations which have been made in support of various theories. But the identity of only two of the five kingdoms is definitely given by the prophet. These are the first and last, the kingdoms of gold and of stone. "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power and strength and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine

hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." The first kingdom therefore is Babylon.

The three succeeding kingdoms are not mentioned so definitely. Their characteristics are more or less broadly described, but no actual details are given. All we can say with certainty about them is that they will follow one another in unbroken succession through the period of time symbolised by the image, that the second is inferior to Babylon, that the third will be remarkable for its world-wide domination, and that the fourth will at first be a kingdom of immense strength, but that it will subsequently become divided and be as a mixture of iron and clay.

But the identity of the fifth kingdom of stone is clearly revealed to us. "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter." This can be none other than God's own kingdom, the kingdom of Christ.

The second prophecy of which the interpretation is given is that contained in the vision of the great tree, described in the fourth chapter of Daniel. Again Nebuchadnezzar has a remarkable dream, and again he asks Daniel to interpret its meaning for him. In the dream he saw a great tree, which reached to heaven and in the shadow of which the birds and beasts came and rested. Then suddenly a voice ordered that the tree should be hewn down, but that

the "stump of his roots should be left in the earth" until "seven times pass over him."

"This is the interpretation, O king," says Daniel; "and this is the decree of the Most High." He goes on to tell the king that this vision, like the former one, refers to the king himself. Nebuchadnezzar was the great tree, and his widespread empire the extending branches of the tree. Nebuchadnezzar's abasement was represented by the cutting down of the tree, and the temporary nature of the abasement by the fact that the roots of the tree were bound with brass and iron until seven times had passed. "They shall drive thee from man, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." And, as the rest of the chapter tells us, "all this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar." But, as will be seen later, the "seven times" of the Babylonian king's abasement have a special significance.

The third prophecy with which we have to deal is that of the handwriting on the wall of the palace of Belshazzar, as recounted in the fifth chapter of Daniel. On the last night of his life, Belshazzar, the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, gave a great feast. That feast marked the culmination of the sin of Babylon, for in the course of it the golden vessels which the Babylonians had taken from the Temple at Jerusalem were used in the worship of idols. Then "in the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." Amazed at this marvel, he summoned his astrologers, but none of them could

interpret the writing. Then Daniel was sent for at the suggestion of the queen. "I will read the writing unto the king," says the prophet; "and make known to him the interpretation. This is the writing that was written: Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. Peres; Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." That same night the prophecy was fulfilled. Belshazzar fell before the Medes and Persians, and his empire was divided among the victors.

In interpreting the writing on the wall, the prophet also revealed the identity of the second kingdom of the image seen in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar. The silver kingdom was the Medo-Persian Empire.

The fourth interpretation which is provided for us by the Bible itself is that of the Ram and the He-goat. This vision was seen by Daniel himself and it is the archangel Gabriel who subsequently interprets it to him. In this vision a ram with two horns, signifying the "kings of Media and Persia," is cast to the ground and trampled upon by the he-goat which comes from the west. "The rough goat," says the archangel, "is the king of Grecia; and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power."

Thus was the overthrow of Xerxes by Alexander the Great foretold, and the identity of the third kingdom of the image established. The kingdom of brass was Greece.

The fifth interpretation is that of the Beasts, mentioned in the seventh chapter of Daniel. This vision is the counterpart of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the

image. It deals with the same subject, but from a different point of view. The worldly king of Babylon was struck by the brilliance of the metals of which the image he saw was composed ; the man of God, on the other hand, was struck chiefly by the ferocity of the beasts which he saw in his vision. The world sees the pomp and circumstance of its kings, but God sees beneath the surface and sees the underlying misery and strife.

There can be no doubt that the two visions are identical. Each deals with the rise and fall of four kingdoms. Each starts from the same point of time ; that of the Babylonian Empire. Each shows how the four empires are successive and that they are followed by a fifth, the kingdom of Christ which fills all the world.

In his vision the prophet saw the four beasts signifying the four empires rise successively out of the sea. "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings ; and I beheld until the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it : and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo, another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl ; the beast had also four heads ; and dominion was given to it. . . . And behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; and it had great iron teeth ; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it ; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it ; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots ; and behold, in this horn there were

eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." But the victory of the kingdom of Christ over the beasts is not symbolised in this vision as a struggle, but as a judgment and condemnation, so that the beasts were destroyed.

Then follows "the interpretation of the things." "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces." Then it shall be divided into ten smaller kingdoms, as was the case with the iron empire of the image. And among these kingdoms there rises the little horn, which shall "make war with the saints and prevail against them." "They shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion."

Leaving the little horn for future consideration, we know that the fourth beast empire which devoured the whole earth, and the fourth kingdom of the image, the iron kingdom, represented Rome.

Coming now to the first chapter of Revelation, we get to the sixth interpretation provided by the Bible itself. This is that of the Seven Stars and the Seven Candlesticks. In this case the interpreter is none other than the Lord Himself. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

It is a remarkable fact that these churches are intimately connected with the predictions contained in the later parts of the Revelation and referring to the events of the last times culminating in the second advent, the Millennium, and the judgment. This connection is revealed in the letters sent to the seven churches. Each of these letters contains promises,

and these promises are found to correspond with the predictions in the later portions of the book. Thus, compare the following promises with the corresponding predictions :

The promise to Ephesus :
 "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life." Chap. xxii. 2.

The promise to Smyrna : "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

"Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power." Chap. xx. 6.

The promise to Pergamos :
 "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he which receiveth it."

"And he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself." Chap. xix. 12.

The promise to Thyatira :
 "He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."

"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron." Chap. xix. 15.

The promise to Sardis : "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

"A great multitude . . . stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes." Chap. vii. 9.

The promise to Philadelphia :
 "Him that overcometh . . . and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God."

"And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." Chap. xxi. 2.

The promise to Laodicea :
 "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne."

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Chap. xx. 4, 6.

The conclusion to be drawn from this striking relation between promise and prophecy is obviously that the Apocalypse refers to the same body as that to which the promises were made; in other words, that its prophecies deal with the experiences of the Church.

We now turn to the seventh interpretation; that of the Woman, Babylon the Great, and of the seven-headed, ten-horned Beast that supported her.

Two objects are purposely contrasted one with the other in the Book of Revelation in order that we may realise how great is the gulf that separates them. These objects are the Harlot and the Bride, or, as they are also symbolised, Babylon the Great and New Jerusalem. "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Compare this revolting picture with the Bride who was "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white."

The angel who showed the vision of the Harlot, or Babylon the Great, to the prophet, interpreted the vision, and in so doing laid stress on the chief points. It is remarkable how everyone of these points indicates that Rome was the object specified.

"The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." At the date when John saw the vision, Rome was in the full zenith of her power, and he could not have mistaken the meaning of the angel. The city is also represented

as standing on seven hills. As every school-boy knows, Rome is built on the seven hills of the Palatine, Quirinal, Aventine, Coelian, Viminal, Esquiline, and Janiculan.

The harlot city was seated upon many waters, and the angel interprets this as meaning that it had dominion over "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." At that time Rome was mistress of the earth. Again, the harlot city is seated on a ten-horned beast. In the vision of Daniel it will be remembered that the last of the great kingdoms is represented as such a beast; and so the connection between the two prophecies is established.

The ten horns are interpreted as ten kingdoms into which the empire was to be divided at some future date. As is well known, the western Roman Empire was afterwards split up into ten separate kingdoms, and that the number has remained ten, in spite of alternating conquest and fall, ever since.

In all ages men of vastly differing ideals and outlook have identified Rome with the harlot city. Augustine wrote of "Rome, the second Babylon," and all the early fathers accepted the same interpretation. Protestant commentators have always insisted on the interpretation, and many eminent members of the Roman Church have been compelled to admit it. But the Romanists declare that it is Pagan Rome that is referred to, while the Protestants declare that it is Papal Rome.

This is so important a point that it may be well to quote the words of an acknowledged authority. Fairness demands that we shall not pronounce a seeming Christian Church to be the Harlot City of the Apocalypse without having first carefully weighed the evidence, for there can be no greater accusation brought against any Church than this.

In his volume "On the Apocalypse," Bishop Words-

worth sums up the Protestant point of view in the following words :

“ If we imagine the Woman on the Beast to be Heathen and not Christian Rome, where are the ten kingdoms, which had not existed in St. John’s age, and which were to arise and receive power contemporaneously with Heathen Rome ? It was destroyed before such kingdoms arose.

“ But now adopt, again, the other supposition. Let the Beast, with the Woman enthroned upon it, represent a Church. Let it represent a Church planted on the seven hills on which the Woman sits ; let it represent the Church of Rome. Then all is plain. When the empire of Rome fell, new kingdoms arose from the ruins. The ten horns of the Beast sprouted up ; then the Church of Rome increased in strength ; and these kingdoms received power at the same time with her.

“ And look again at the prophecy. These kings, we read, give their power and strength to the Beast. But the Beast is the real sovereign of their subjects. What is the fact ? The European kingdoms which arose at the dissolution of the Roman Empire did surrender themselves to the dominion of the Church of Rome. Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Hungary, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and our own England, for many centuries were subject to the Papacy. The Woman who sat upon the Beast had her hand upon its ten horns, and held them firmly in her grasp. She treated them as her subjects. The Papal coins claim this. ‘ Omnes reges servient ei.’ ‘ Gens et Regnum, quod tibi non servierit, peribit : ’ ‘ All kings serve her.’ ‘ The man and the kingdom who will not serve thee shall perish.’

“ Now, again, for argument’s sake, let the Woman of the Beast be Heathen Rome. Then we readily allow that Alaric with his Goths, Attila with his Huns,

Genseric with his Vandals, Odoacer with his Heruli, did indeed sack the city of Rome. But when did they ever receive power together with Rome? When did they give their power and their strength to Heathen Rome? Never. If, therefore, the Woman on the Beast is only the city of Pagan Rome, then the prophecy of St. John has failed. But the marvel predicted by the Apocalypse is this—and a stupendous mystery it is—that some of the powers that received strength with the Beast, and gave up their might to it, they, under the overruling sway of God's retributive justice, will one day rise against the Woman seated on the Beast, and tear her flesh and burn her with fire. And, what is still more awfully marvellous, they will do this, although they will league with the Beast and with the False Prophet against Christ; and they will destroy Babylon, not for love of Zion, nor for the maintenance of God's truth or the advancement of His glory, but in a mysterious transport of indignation and in a wild ecstasy of revenge, and when they have done the deed, and have destroyed Babylon, they will weep over her.

“Such is the prophecy of St. John. This portion of it remains to be fulfilled. But Pagan Rome has long since ceased to be. Therefore these predictions cannot concern Pagan Rome; but they do concern the seven-hilled city of Rome; and therefore they point at Papal Rome; and the Woman on the Beast is not Heathen Rome, but it is the city and the Church of Papal Rome.”

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PAPACY AND ANTICHRIST

IN the prophecies of Daniel we get a representation of the Papacy which is more or less confined to its political activities. Writing some five hundred years afterwards, St. Paul gives us a view of the ecclesiastical nature of the Antichrist. St. Paul's predictions fall into two divisions. First, there are those which deal with a great apostasy which would in due course arise in the Church; and, secondly, there are those which show the power which would stand at the head of that apostasy.

In his address to the Church at Ephesus, recorded in the twentieth chapter of Acts, the apostle warns the elders that there would arise among themselves "grievous wolves, not sparing of the flock." "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; therefore watch, and remember how I ceased not to warn you." The great importance of this coming apostasy was proved by the fact that the apostle should confine his attention wholly to it and not to other stormy details in the career of the Church. Within a few years from the time when he wrote, the persecutions were to begin. Christians were to be slaughtered by their thousands and hundred thousands. But these terrible events were not even mentioned; attention is concentrated on the worse evil of the coming apostasy. The danger from within was destined to

wage a far more merciless war against faith than dangers from without.

Perverse and mercenary teachers were to draw the disciples after them instead of drawing them to Christ. They would rob and oppress the Church. They would be wolves feeding on the flock instead of feeding it.

In the first Epistle to Timothy the apostle writes : " Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot iron ; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." These words show the character and origin of the coming apostasy. The doctrines are those of the Evil One. Marriage and the eating of meat, both of which the apostle had just previously ordained as in accordance with the true religion, were to be prohibited by spurious authorities deriving their inspirations from Satan and not from Christ. Asceticism, or external religion, was to be substituted for the primitive faith of inward holiness. Paul well knew the dangers of external religion, which may cloak the blackest soul with a show of piety, and he roundly denounced them that professed it, in the words " speaking lies in hypocrisy."

That it is concerned only with this external religion and cares nothing for the inward trueness, that its shell of ceremonies is often but a hiding-place for hypocrisy and worse, have always been the chief charges brought by the Protestants against Rome. The Protestant sees in the Papacy the culmination of the dangers to which St. Paul called attention. The

apostle knew how insidious and potent that danger was. Open atheism would attract but few men; but external religion, asceticism cloaking corruption, would seduce many from faith.

In the second Epistle to the Thessalonians Paul develops the subject. He tells the Church that before Christ will come again, the apostasy against which he had already written warnings would spread over the world and come to a climax in a great evil power. This power is referred to under three names: "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," and "the lawless one." At first sight this might seem to refer to a single individual, but a little thought will show that the apostle refers to a body of men or a system. It will be noticed that it is always "the" man of sin, and never "a" man of sin. This indicates that we are to take the phrase in a broad light. The distinction which lies in the two articles is illustrated by the common phrase "the king never dies," meaning that the office of king is never in abeyance. A king is an individual who dies, the king is an office which never dies. Similarly, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies once every year. This obviously does not mean that a certain high priest did this, but that the whole succession of high priests did it.

The context finally proves that a succession of men of sin, all similar one to the other, is meant. The apostle tells the Thessalonians that the man of sin is about to be born of "the mystery of iniquity," and that he will live until the second coming of Christ. This period we know to be at least some nineteen centuries; and, as it is quite clear that it is in human form that this evil will be manifested, it is obvious that the man of sin signifies an office which will be filled by a succession of men and will be the visible head of the evil and apostasy which the apostle describes.

Moreover, it is clear that this man of sin is the same as the little horn of Daniel's vision and the Beast of the Apocalypse ; in other words, it is the Antichrist.

Paul gives a full-length portrait of the Antichrist, and the consideration of a few of its features may well reveal the identity of the power which is the embodiment of Satan. He is represented as sitting in the house of God, exalted and enthroned with much splendour to receive the adoration and homage of a multitude of apostate Christians. Beneath him is "the mystery of iniquity" in the form of a cloud. On this cloud is written "doth already work"; indicating to the Thessalonians, that the seeds from which this stupendous evil was to spring had already germinated in their day, and that the world would not have long to wait for the spectacle of the man of sin rising up in the Church. On one side of the throne of the Antichrist is a broken arch, covered with Roman sculpture. This arch at one time obstructed the way of the man of sin to his throne. It had to be broken into fragments before he could ascend to his seat with "all deceivableness of unrighteousness."

The Antichrist himself is represented as possessing features which are remarkable for their expression of spurious sanctity. At first sight the Antichrist appears a godly man, but closer examination reveals the signs of pride and cunning and worldliness. But there can be no doubt as to the power of the Antichrist. It is written on every line of his face. On his head he wears a crown which is different from the crowns usually worn by kings, and on which is inscribed the words, "King of kings and Lord of lords." Hence the man of sin is ruler both of the Church and the world. In keeping with his spurious piety he holds up his hand and blesses the multitude that kneels before him.

The true nature of that blessing is revealed by the

shape that lurks behind the man of sin. It is a dark figure, half hidden from view. But its face can be seen, and it is full of hideous malignity. There is no false piety on this face ; it is expressive only of fierce hatred and concentrated wickedness. This shape also wears a crown, and on it is written, " God of this world." He cannot be seen by the multitude of worshippers, but he directs and inspires the Antichrist whom they worship. They little guess the real character of that to which they render homage. The cunning and power of the " god of this world " is immense. Through his puppet on the throne he leads the multitude farther and farther away from truth. He persuades them to submit without questioning to the teaching and commands which he puts into the mouth of the Antichrist. Finally, he orders them to " fall down and worship me," and the deluded multitude, thinking that they hear the words of the true God, immediately obey the command.

Two volumes serve the man of sin as footstools. They are the " Laws Human and Divine." This impious act is noticed by some of the throng in the house of God, and they seem to be protesting. At some distance from the scene are the prophets and the apostles. Farther away still there is the Son of Man seated upon a radiant throne and in the midst of His Father's glory. He is preparing to visit judgment on the man of sin, and towards him some of the crowd are looking and anxiously awaiting His coming.

There are several features of this picture which God has drawn for us through the instrumentality of His apostle, which are worthy of our attention. First of all, it will be noticed that the man of sin is seated in the house of God. Paul often uses this expression to signify the Christian Church. He described the Corinthians thus : " Ye are the temple of the living God." In the Epistle to the Ephesians he refers to

the Church as "the habitation of God through the Spirit." It is, then, not a temple built by hands in which the man of sin is to be found, but in the spiritual temple of Christianity. The Antichrist will usurp the place of God in the very temple which God has built for Himself "with living stones."

From his portrait it is obvious that the man of sin is a spurious imitation of Christ Himself. He occupies the position of Christ, and has usurped His power and prerogatives, but he does not represent Him at all. He is His enemy, and bitterly opposed to Him. Christ acts for God, the man of sin is the puppet of Satan. Christ is light and life to mankind, the man of sin is darkness and death. The Son of God humbled Himself and came as a lowly man among men; but the man of sin exalts himself and by his actions proclaims that "he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

Another notable feature of the picture is the arch that was originally a firm barrier against the man of sin's accession to power, but was afterwards broken. Paul speaks guardedly of this "restraining power." But the Thessalonians knew perfectly well to what power he was referring, for he had told them by word of mouth. "Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you?" We must therefore go to the early Church for information as to the identity of this restraining power, the loosing of which was destined to have such dire effects. Here the record is plain, for several of the early fathers have written that the apostle told them that that power was the dominion of the Cæsars, and that so long as the imperial power continued that of the man of sin could not develop. This would also point to the fact that Rome was to be the seat of the man of sin.

It will also be noticed that in the three names given by the apostle to the Antichrist there is a complete summary of the character of the latter. "The man of sin" signifies that he will be sinful himself and the occasion of sin in others. "The son of perdition" shows that he will be false by nature, as was Judas, whose doom he is to share. "The lawless one" signifies that he will set at defiance all laws, both divine and human. Satan is to be his master and the source of all his power. He will last as long as the Evil One, but when Christ comes and finally destroys the spirit of all evil, then will the man of sin suffer a like fate. Hence the succession of the man of sin is to continue until Christ's second coming at the Millennium, when it will receive judgment.

From the writings of St. Paul, therefore, we obtain a very complete view of the ecclesiastical character of the Antichrist. The prophet Daniel completes the picture by giving a view of another aspect of the character of the man of sin.

After seeing in vision the three beasts signifying the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Greek empires, the prophet relates that he saw "a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before which there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His

wheels as burning fire. . . . I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake : I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away : yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time."

The angel interpreted this part of the vision as follows : " I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass ; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet ; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell ; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them ; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High ; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise : and another shall arise after them ; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws : and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven

shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

It has been abundantly proved that the fourth beast was Rome, but the point with which we have here to deal is the little horn. A little consideration will show that it is intimately connected with the man of sin mentioned by St. Paul in his epistles. The seat of power of the little horn was obviously Rome, for it grew out of the head of the fourth beast. Rome was also the seat of the power of the man of sin. The little horn begins to rise to power a short time after the rise of the ten other horns. As has been shown in the previous chapter, the rise of the ten horns marked the fall of the empire of the Cæsars and the breaking up of their dominion into ten separate kingdoms. And we have already seen that the arch which was the barrier to the man of sin's accession to power was the empire of the Cæsars. Hence both the horn and the man of sin took their rise at the same time. In the same way both will be destroyed at the same time: the little horn at the second coming of Christ; the man of sin, so the apostle expressly mentions, at the epiphany. Moreover, both begin as insignificant powers and gradually attain great earthly consequence. Both exalt themselves against God, the horn by words, and the man of sin by deeds. Both claim to be teachers of men. And both are persecutors; the horn wears out the saints and prevails against them; the man of sin opposes truth, and is the lawless one. Finally, both are symbolical of the Papacy. Daniel sees the Papacy as an earthly kingdom, the apostle visualises it as an apostate ecclesiasticism.

It has already been shown that the Papacy is also represented by the harlot city of Revelation. Therefore, by combining these three sets of prophecies we

should obtain a complete view of the career and characteristics of the Roman Church, or Antichrist.

A sketch of the rise of the Roman Church will show how completely these prophecies have been fulfilled. The first assault of the barrier arch occurred when Constantine became converted to Christianity. Immediately Christianity became an affair of state importance and immediately corruption and worldliness, the germs of which had for long been apparent, increased at a remarkable rate. By the end of the fourth century bishops were living in pomp and luxury comparable with that of the emperor himself. The fall of the last of the Cæsars, Augustulus, gave a further impetus to the process of widening the breach between the modern and the primitive Church. The Bishop of Rome became more and more recognised as the head of the Christian Church, and his influence in spiritual matters verged almost on absolutism. He had still, however, to acknowledge the worldly authority of the three horns. The first horn was the sway of Odoacer. He ruled over Rome for about twenty years, and then he fell before the Ostrogoths, and Theodoric held dominion over Rome and the rest of Italy. Sixty years later Belisarius overthrew the Ostrogoths, and the Lombards came into power. Now there are increasing signs that the arch had fallen. The Lombards did not make Rome their capital, but left it to her bishops, who thus acquired a mixed temporal and spiritual authority. But the dominion of the bishops was insignificant; Rome was then at the lowest ebb of her political influence and power. What was once the metropolis of the world was now of no more importance than a village. But the bishops of Rome, their appetites whetted by this small taste of temporal power, achieved by the arts of diplomacy what they could not attain by force. Thanks to alternate

promises of eternal salvation and threats of hell, they prevailed upon Pepin and Charlemagne to make war on the Lombards. These, the third horn, were driven out of Italy, and the victors presented their lands to the Pope. Thus did a Christian Bishop become an earthly prince, as Daniel had foretold.

It would almost seem impossible that a creature possessing the moral attributes of the Antichrist could exist without being observed and condemned by the universal judgment of mankind. But there is no truer saying than that familiarity breeds contempt.

In the first place, it is notorious that numbers of the Popes have been veritable monsters of iniquity in their private lives. Papal Rome has had its Neros as well as Pagan Rome. But the real character of the whole succession is clearly seen in the various institutions which have sprung from Romanism.

An institution for which the Papacy has been justly denounced is that of the sale of Indulgences. In these the Pope made a bargain with sinners. In consideration of their joining a crusade, or paying over a sum of money, or giving up certain property, the Pope granted them pardons for sins. This traffic developed into a most monstrous system. Luther has given us a description of the progress of an indulgence-monger from town to town bearing before him the bull of Leo X on a velvet cushion. "Indulgences," says the Papal agent, "are the most precious and sublime of God's gifts; this red cross has as much efficacy as the cross of Jesus Christ. Draw near, and I will give you letters duly sealed, by which even the sins you shall hereafter desire to commit shall be all forgiven you. There is no sin so great that indulgence cannot remit. Pay, and you shall be forgiven."

The indulgences were in the following form, and a

glance will show the nature of the Christianity of the man who issued them: "Our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thee, A. B., and absolve thee by the merits of His most holy sufferings. I, in virtue of the apostolic power committed to me, absolve thee from all excesses, sins, and crimes that thou mayest have committed, however great and enormous they may be, and of whatever kind. . . . I restore thee to the innocence and purity of thy baptism, so that at the moment of death the gates of Paradise open to thee. And if thou shouldst live long this grace continueth unchangeable, till the time of thy end. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." We can see the man of sin unctuously signing these impious documents by the thousand and filling his coffers with the proceeds. The utter impudence of the scheme is displayed by the fact that the payment for the indulgence did not vary in accordance with the magnitude of the sin, but with the means of the sinner. A prince who wanted to marry his cousin had to pay a thousand pounds; whereas a poor man who had murdered his wife acquired salvation for three pounds.

The effect of the sale of these things on the morality of those who believed in them can be imagined. A hint is contained in the words of Spanheim: "The institution of indulgence was the mint which coined money for the Roman Church; the gold mines for the profligate nephews and natural children of the Popes; the nerves of the papal wars; the inexhaustible fountain of luxury to the Popes."

No institution connected with the Roman Church has been more bitterly attacked than the Society of Jesus, or Society of Satan, as it has been called. That there is more than a little justification for this denunciation may be gathered from the words of the Romanist King of Portugal, who braved the thunder

of the Pope and expelled the Jesuits from his kingdom. "It cannot be, but that the licentiousness introduced by the Jesuits, of which the three leading features are falsehood, murder, and perjury, should give a new character to morals. Their doctrines render murder innocent, sanctify falsehood, authorise perjury, deprive the laws of their power, destroy the submission of subjects, allow individuals the liberty of killing, calumniating, lying, and forswearing themselves, as their advantage may dictate ; they remove the fear of divine and human laws, so that Christian and civil society could not exist, were they paramount."

The sole object of the Jesuits is to increase the power of the Papacy by any means available, and their efforts have always received, at least, the tacit approval of the Pope. Their entire lack of scruple is shown by their work in the mission fields. In India they posed as pure Brahmins, and blended Christianity with such practices as the suttee. In China they taught that Christ was a very similar person to Confucius, and that Christianity permitted the free indulgence in all manner of vices. They even went so far as to assert that Christ had never been crucified. To the Red Indians Christ was represented as a great chief who had scalped more men, women, and children than all the other chiefs put together. They would make any compromise, or tell any lie, in order to spread the power of their Master. The very word "Jesuit" is taken throughout the world as signifying the lowest and meanest form to which unscrupulousness can sink.

There are many other institutions connected with the Church of Rome which remind us only too forcibly of the man of sin and his ways. But perhaps the greatest accusation which can be brought against the Papacy is that it has always denied the right of man

to read the Scriptures, and this in open defiance of the bidding of Christ Himself. Wickliffe, Tyndale, Luther, and all the other translators of the Bible have drawn down on their heads the fulminations of Rome. The translations have been burnt whenever they fell into Papist hands. In the eighteenth century the Pope issued a bull which states that the idea that the reading of the Scriptures is for everybody is "false, shocking, scandalous, impious, and blasphemous." Even in our own day we have had Popes who have denounced Bible Societies as "pestilent dangers, defilements of faith, and crafty devices by which the very foundations of religion are undermined." If the great Protestant reformers and their followers have indeed been right in regarding the Papacy as Antichrist, then this opposition to God's Word is easily understood. But it is impossible to sympathise with it, for the more the Bible is read and the religion of the Popes is undermined the better for mankind.

One of the most marked characteristics of the little horn in Daniel and the Beast of Revelation is the fact that they "speak great things against God." Here again the Popes have fulfilled the prophecy, and more than fulfilled it. No power on earth, even the greatest of the heathen kings and emperors, can compare with the Papacy in this respect. In his "Acts and Monuments" Fox has collected nearly two hundred and fifty papal documents, each of which adds to the evidence. For our present purposes the following report of the actual words of the Pope, recorded by Cardinal Manning, will be sufficient: "You say that I have no authority over the Christian world, that I am not the Vicar of the Good Shepherd, that I am not the supreme interpreter of the Christian faith. I am all these. . . . I acknowledge no civil power. I am subject to no prince; and I claim more than this. I claim to be the Supreme Judge and

director of the consciences of men ; of the peasant who tills the field, and the prince that sits on the throne ; of the household that lives in the shade of privacy, and the legislature that make laws for kingdoms. I am the sole, last, Supreme Judge of what is right and wrong." Are these the words that we should expect from the lips of one who believes himself to be the deputy of the Son of Man ?

The man of sin, we are told, exalts himself by deeds. What more blasphemous scene could one imagine than that which takes place at the election of a new Pope ? The selected candidate is clothed in jewelled vestments and then lifted on to the altar and the cardinals prostrate themselves and worship him.

It was predicted of the Antichrist that he would oppress the saints. Christians have suffered a thousand times more persecution at the hands of Rome than at those of all the pagan emperors. The Inquisition was the longest and most frightful persecution that the world has ever known. Although its horrors are no longer put into practice, yet the theory underlying them is still rampant in Rome. Every year, on the Thursday of Passion Week the Pope comes out from his palace and solemnly excommunicates and curses all who do not admit his sovereign power over their souls and consciences. Volumes could be filled with the story of the horrors of the Inquisition and the massacres that have been carried out at the behest of the Papacy. The following summary will reveal the hideousness of that story, so fully in keeping with the malign shape that lurks behind the throne of the man of sin. "As some luxurious emperors of Rome exhausted the whole art of pleasure, so that a reward was promised to any who should invent a new one ; so have Romish persecutors exhausted the whole art of pain, so that it will now be difficult to invent or discover a new kind of it, which they

have not already practised on those marked out as heretics. They have been shot, stabbed, stoned, drowned, beheaded, hanged, drawn, quartered, impaled, burnt, buried alive, roasted on spits, baked in ovens, thrown into furnaces, tumbled over precipices, cast from the tops of towers, sunk in mire, starved, hung on tenter-hooks, suspended by the hair of the head, by the hands and feet, stuffed and blown up with gunpowder, ripped with swords and sickles, tied to the tails of horses, dragged over streets and sharp flints, broken on the wheel, beaten on anvils with hammers, blown with bellows, burned with hot irons, torn piecemeal by red-hot pincers, slashed with knives, hacked with axes, hewed with chisels, pricked with forks, stuck from head to foot with pins, choked with lime, water, rags, urine, or mangled pieces of their own bodies crammed down their throats, shut up in caves and dungeons, tied to stakes, nailed to trees, tormented with lighted matches, scalding oil, burning pitch, melted lead, etc., etc. To dig out eyes, tear off nails, cut off ears, lips, tongues, arms, breasts, etc., has been but ordinary sport to Rome's converters and holy butchers." In these and in a thousand worse horrors is there not discernible the rage of the Beast against those who will not fall down and worship him ?

It may be said that Rome no longer practises these things. True, but the spirit of malignant hate which gave rise to them remains. The authorised curse for heretics is as follows : " May God Almighty and all His saints curse them, with the curse with which the devil and his angels are cursed. Let them be destroyed out of the land of the living. Let the vilest of deaths come upon them, and let them descend alive into the pit. Let their seed be destroyed from the earth ; by hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and all distress, let them perish. May they have all

misery, and pestilence, and torment. Let all they have be cursed. Speaking and silent, let them be cursed. Within and without, let them be cursed. From the crown of the head to the soles of the foot, let them be cursed. Let their eyes become blind, let their ears become deaf, let their mouth become dumb, let their tongue cleave to their jaws, let not their hands handle, let not their feet walk. Let all the members of their body be cursed. Cursed let them be standing, lying, from this time forth for ever; and thus let their candle be extinguished in the presence of God, at the Day of Judgment. Let their burial be with dogs and asses. Let hungry wolves devour their corpses. Let the devil and his angels be their companions for ever. Amen, amen, so be it, so be it."

Are these Christian or antichristian words? Are they not in full accord with the spirit of the office which celebrated the massacre of a hundred thousand Protestants on St. Bartholomew's Day with a *Te Deum*?

We now turn to the dominion of the Antichrist. "Power was given him, over all kindreds, and tongues and nations." This power is to be so absolute that all, rich and poor, great and small, are to be brought into subjection of it. But this power is diverse from that of all the other powers. These powers won their dominion by the sword; they conquered those who fell under their sway. But the subjection to the Antichrist is to be voluntarily given. The ten horns give their power and strength to the little horn. The Antichrist will employ methods of conquest more subtle than the sword. He will conquer by wiles and ruses and "lying wonders."

This contrast is well brought out in the vision of Daniel, where all the other powers are seen to obtain their dominion by means of devouring and stamping on their victims. Again, the Papacy is the only

power that fits in with the description given to the Antichrist in the Bible. The Popes built up a tremendous dominion over all kindreds, tongues, and nations without having to fight for it. By fostering darkness and superstition they gradually brought all kings and peoples under their sway. How complete was that sway is little realised in these days, when light has pierced the darkness, and superstition and the temporal power of the Papacy have fled, hand in hand. It was the boast of Gregory the Second that all the kings of the West revered the Pope as a God on earth, and he had ample justification for the assertion. He could make and unmake kings, and none dare resist his decree. The story of the reign of King John is but an example of the world-wide dominion exercised by the Popes of the dark ages. Their power over the people was equally absolute. They could suspend all religious observances, from the baptism and marriage of the living to the burial of the dead, for as long a period as they chose. If any man dared to protest, or even to murmur against the decrees of the Pontiff, he was promptly branded as a heretic, and the rack or the stake soon put an end to his rebellious mood.

In every particular the Papacy fulfils the prophecies of Daniel, Paul, and the Revelation, with regard to the Antichrist. Is it, then, to be wondered at that men are anxious as to the future of Britain when there are so many signs that there is a danger that the nation is at least toying with the idea of reunion with Rome? From the time that Britain shook off the yoke of Papal dominion she has prospered exceedingly; ever since the days when Romanism began again to flourish in the land she has found herself continually vexed with fears and dangers. Is she blind to the fate with which she is toying? We have grown careless of the true religion of our forefathers. The old

and righteous hatred of Popery has given way to the tolerance of ignorance, virile faith has given place to an emasculate mockery of Christianity. Those who associate with the Antichrist and receive his mark on their foreheads will share in his doom. Therefore, to your Bibles, O ye Britons !

CHAPTER XXV

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

IN the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation we read concerning the Beast or Antichrist as follows : “ And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion : and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death and his deadly wound was healed ; and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast : and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast ? and who is able to make war with him ? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies : and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

By utilising the year-day theory, which has already been mentioned, we can from this passage calculate the duration of the domination of the Antichrist, or the Papacy. There are 1,260 days in the “ forty and two months,” therefore the Church of Rome will hold its power for 1,260 years, or exactly half the “ seven times,” *i.e.* 2,520 years, of the Times of the Gentiles.

But in the same chapter we are told that the Beast has a mysterious number attached to it. “ Here is

wisdom ; let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred, three score, and six." In other words, 666.

Throughout the Scriptures the number seven is the sacred number of perfection and completeness. The contents of the Apocalypse, for instance, are contained under seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials—three sevens in contrast to the three sixes which is the number of the Beast. This contrast shows that the three sixes of the Beast represent a perfect imperfection, just as the three sevens represent perfection.

Dr. Grattan Guinness has shown that this number bears a number of remarkable relationships to the chronology of the period of the domination of the Beast as expressed by the year-day theory. As he says, God has, by means of a secret cipher, engraved this stigma, this mark of reprobation on the very brow of the self-exalting, blaspheming, and saint-persecuting power ; and He has, moreover, in order that we may not fail to note the contrast, set it in the midst of a series of periods whose septiform measures bring out its peculiar and evil character.

There is nothing in the period of the domination of the Beast to suggest the essentially sabbatic nature associated with the septiform periods of the Scriptures. Everywhere else in the divine scheme of things, from the Creation to the Millennium, this sabbatic tendency of one day's rest and worship in seven is clearly observable. But there is nothing restful or appertaining to worship in the rule of the Beast. It is a period of strife and hatred, a discord in the midst of harmonies.

Fully to understand the relationships which exist between the number of the Beast and the chronology of the prophecies, it is necessary to have a knowledge

of astronomy and the soli-lunar cycles. Obviously the subject cannot be gone into deeply here, and the uninitiated must therefore take them on trust. He may, however, assure himself that they are all based upon the discoveries of modern science, and that the most learned of modern astronomers must admit their truth. At any rate, the relationships are sufficiently striking to warrant attention.

In the first place, 1,260 years comprises eighteen of the 70-years cycle. It is $6 + 6 + 6$ such cycles. Again, the period is equal to 66 lunar cycles and 6 years, or 60 cycles + 6 cycles + 6 years. And during this period the gain of the sun is 66 weeks of months and 66 days.

A further link between history and astronomy is revealed by the fact that, just as the dominion of typical ancient Babylon over the typical Israel lasted 66 solar years, the remainder of the captivity being spent under Medo-Persian dominion, so the dominion of the antitypical modern Babylon over the antitypical Israel lasts for 66 lunar cycles and 6 years.

Literal Babylon was a type of spiritual Babylon—the Church of Rome. Nebuchadnezzar, the destroyer of the temple, set up a golden image of himself 66 cubits high and 6 cubits broad. He was, moreover, the incarnation of all the characteristics of the little horn. The Pope is the self-exalting monarch of modern Babylon, and commands all nations to bow down before him, just as his type, the king of ancient Babylon, commanded all the nations under his sway to bow down before his image. Nebuchadnezzar is thus the type of the Papacy. According to Ptolemy and all the other ancient historians, the reign of Nebuchadnezzar lasted forty-three years. Again we find the number of the Beast stamped upon the period, for during that time the soli-lunar gain is 66 weeks + 6 days.

If we regard the 1,260 years of the prophecy as prophetic years of 360 days each, then the gain of the solar years during that time is 6,060 days.

It is obviously impossible that all these relationships should have originated in mere chance. They are too striking and too numerous to be dismissed as coincidences. They must have been designed. Neither will human design explain their existence, for neither Daniel nor John was acquainted with the niceties of astronomical science, and it is only within recent years that man has possessed instruments of sufficient delicacy to enable him to make these calculations with the necessary accuracy. Hence, the only possible explanation of their existence is that they are in strict accordance with the immutable purposes of God. Thus does modern science, in spite of itself, prove the divine inspiration of the Bible.

While dealing with the chronological portions of the prophecies relating to the Antichrist, it may be well to see how far they have been fulfilled in human experience.

It was Pope Gregory XIII who reformed the calendar by issuing a decree that October 5th, 1582, should be taken as the 15th, incidentally bringing the standard time into the agreement with the prophecies. He died in 1585, exactly 1,260 years after the Council of Nice, which was summoned by Constantine in 325, and which may be regarded as the earliest starting-point of the power of the Papacy. At that time Elizabeth was on the throne of England, and the Reformation was hacking at the Papal power. From that time onward there has been a constant diminution of the influence of the Papacy. Sixtus V, who succeeded Gregory, "was the last Pope who rendered himself formidable to the European Courts."

But neither Rome nor the Church of Rome was built in a day, and there are several stages in the

rise of the Papacy from obscure bishopric to ■ world-wide power. One such stage is marked by the Edict of Justinian by which the Bishop of Rome was made "the head of all the Churches." The date of the decree was 533; 1,260 years later saw the horrors of the French Revolution, in the course of which the Pope was made a prisoner, and the power of the Papacy in France received a blow from which it has never recovered.

But the chief date of the rise of the Papacy is 606, when the Emperor Phocas bestowed the title of Pope on the Bishop of Rome; 1,260 years from this date brings us to 1866, and it was in 1870 that Victor Emmanuel moved his Court to the Quirinal and became the sole ruler over united Italy. With that event the Papacy ceased to exist as a temporal power, and the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled.

There remains the spiritual power. At present it is but a shadow of its former self, but it is still strong, as is shown by the spread of Romanism in Britain during recent years. So it will remain, a menace to the true religion until, as the prophecies foretell, Christ comes and finally destroys it.

CHAPTER XXVI

WILL BABYLON RISE AGAIN ?

WE have seen how Babylon is used in the Scriptures to symbolise the modern Church of Rome, which in so many of its characteristics resembles the godless splendours of the capital of Nebuchadnezzar. We have now to consider whether we may expect that the prophecies relating to Babylon will also have a literal fulfilment.

In the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Isaiah the following passages occur: "The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see." "The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of His indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand, it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellence, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there."

Undoubtedly this prophecy received a partial fulfilment in the fall of ancient Babylon. But the context shows that the events described are connected with the second advent of Christ, and that the fall of literal Babylon will not take place until the fall of mystical Babylon, or the Antichrist. The prophecy indicates that the fall of the city will be swift and attended with much bloodshed and many horrors, and that immediately afterwards the place will fall into a state of utter desolation and abasement. The fall of ancient Babylon was not of this nature. After the overthrow of Belshazzar by the Medes, the kingdom and city only fell into decay gradually and not with the dramatic crash of the prophecy.

There are other passages which would lead us to look for a future fall of Babylon. In the next chapter, in dealing with the return of Israel, an event which we know is not to take place until our Lord's return, the prophet says : " And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased ! the golden city ceased ! " So far as the Jews were concerned, there was only one king of Babylon, and that was their arch-enemy, Nebuchadnezzar. And the prophecy cannot be taken as relating to him, for when he, the greatest of the oppressors of the Jews, died, the golden city was still on the flood-tide of prosperity. And the fall of Babylon did not ameliorate the sufferings of the Jews, because they only passed from the bondage of the Babylonians into that of the Medes, and it was not until some six or seven years later that they were given a shadow of their former freedom, a shadow that has never materialised into

a reality down to this day. From the day when Judah was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar down to the present year of grace the Jews have never constituted a free people. They have always been more or less oppressed by the Gentiles. The Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans, and, during the last nineteen centuries, all the peoples of Christendom have in turn held them in thrall. The Lord will not give them rest from their sorrows and their fears until the time of the second advent. It is impossible that the Jews will suddenly wake up to the fact that the prophecy has been fulfilled in the fall of ancient Babylon some twenty centuries or more after the event. It is equally impossible to regard them as marvelling at the fall of modern symbolical Babylon, for the Roman Church is to them only a branch of the religion which has subjected them to innumerable desolations. The only possible fulfilment of the prophecy which could strike them as a remarkable event would be the fall, at the time of the Lord's second coming, of a literal, restored city of Babylon.

The fifty-first chapter of the Book of Jeremiah would also seem to point to the necessity of a new literal city of Babylon for the complete fulfilment of the prophecy: "Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against Me, a destroying wind; and will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about. Against him that bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against him that lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye neither young men; destroy ye utterly all her host. Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldees, and they that are thrust through in her streets. But Israel hath not

been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts ; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel. Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul : be not cut off in her iniquity ; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance ; He will render unto her a recompence. Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken : the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore are the nations mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed : howl for her ; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed."

Again the events described belong wholly to the Lord's day of vengeance, the day of the second coming ; and again there is the description of the fierce, swift onslaught which will destroy Babylon. True, they may be taken as foreshadowing the terrible fate in store for modern symbolical Babylon, the Church of Rome and her supporters. But, without detracting one whit from the force of this symbolical interpretation, it is plain that for a complete fulfilment the destruction of a literal Babylon is necessary. These prophecies were addressed primarily to the Jews, and they would lose much of their significance if they were not to be taken literally. Indeed, if they are only to be taken symbolically as referring to the fate of the Roman Church, they would constitute nothing less than the most cruel deception imaginable. Think of the circumstances under which they were uttered. The people to whom they were addressed were suffering the harshest desolation and abasement at the hands of the Babylonians ; the prophet tells them that a time will come when their oppressors shall be utterly destroyed because of their godlessness. Imagine the effect of such words upon the sufferers. And imagine their disappointment, nay, rage, when they find out that they have only

been deceived, and that the words did not refer to their oppressors, but to a Church of which they knew nothing and cared less. The completeness with which all the prophecies have been fulfilled makes us more than doubt whether such a deception would be practised upon them.

The eighteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation gives us a picture of Babylon rebuilt. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. . . . How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning. . . . And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. The merchandise of gold and silver and precious stones, and of pearls, and of fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things that were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all."

Is such a city impossible to-day? Would to God that it were, but we know that it is not only possible but that we have already our imitation Babylons. Cannot London, New York, Paris, Berlin, and the rest of our modern great cities also be likened

to harlots which sap the strength and faith of man ? Do not the modern plutocratic kings of the earth live deliciously in them ? Are there not innumerable merchants who grow rich on supplying satisfaction for modern luxury and vice ? Traffickers in precious stones, and wines, and all the rest of the vanities mentioned by the prophet ? Have we not those who traffic in the souls of men ? New Babylon will only be an up-to-date city, and its viciousness and luxury will not strike the world as at all uncommon. It will be regarded as the climax of our modern civilisation.

It may be doubted if the city can be built quickly enough to permit of the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning it, for we have already seen that the time of these great things is rapidly drawing nigh. But we have only to look at Chicago, Johannesburg, and a hundred other modern towns to see with what extraordinary speed a city can be built up upon occasion.

And everything will be in favour of the rapid growth of Babylon. It holds a unique position on the face of the earth, and is the most suitable position which a world-emperor, such as the Antichrist will be, could choose for his seat of government. Napoleon realised this, and he had plans drawn up for the complete rebuilding of Babylon, which was to be the seat of the world-empire of his dreams. Those plans are to be seen in Paris to-day. The land around the site is immensely fertile and with proper irrigation and cultivation will be capable of supporting a huge population. Already such irrigation schemes are in existence, and their cost has been estimated at a mere two millions, a modest expenditure for an Antichrist. The scheme for the construction of a railway from Europe to the Persian Gulf has long since emerged from the visionary stage.

That railway will of necessity pass through Babylon. Moreover, there is the immense waterway of the Euphrates, which will allow ships from all parts of the earth to come to new Babylon.

Everything is indeed prepared for the building of the capital of the Antichrist. It will be a city of many wonders and much luxury, but we shall do well to remember the words of the prophet: "Come out of her, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE LITERAL ANTICHRIST

THE great danger which besets all students of the prophetic portions of the Scriptures is that of clinging so blindly to one interpretation that all others are rejected as being of necessity false. Such is the marvellous economy of the prophecies that all of them can have several partial fulfilments, all of which fit in with scrupulous exactitude with the actual words of the prophets. The true student of the Word of God is he who admits the justification of regarding this or that event as a fulfilment of a certain prophecy, but who hesitates to assert that such events are the complete fulfilment of the intentions of God. He will not dare to write "fulfilled" across any prophecy, but will remain ever watchful for fresh fulfilments. Unfortunately, but few are able to maintain this perfect openness of mind. We see the realisation of a prophecy and are so taken up with the astounding accuracy of the foreshadowing that we reject the future and limit the words of God to the past. And Christ Himself told us to be ever watchful.

The prophecies concerning the Antichrist provide an illustration of this. We have seen with what terrible exactitude the Roman Church fulfils the prophecies concerning the man of sin. We may admit that that Church is now ruled by men of moral worth who would shrink from the deeds that have

made Rome a blot upon the fair name of Christianity ; but we must assert that the system which they represent and uphold has proved itself cursed with all the characteristics of the Antichrist.

But that is not to say that the predictions of the Antichrist have received their full and final realisation in the Papacy. We must continue to study the prophecies and look for further and fuller realisations. A careful study of the prophecies gives more than a hint that we may look for a literal fulfilment in the future as well as for a symbolical fulfilment in the past and present. For instance, in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation we read concerning the ten-horned beast : “ Power was given to him over all kindreds and tongues and nations, and all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.” If the Beast is the Papacy in this instance, then all Protestants and members of the Greek Church and all free-thinkers and the heathen must have their names written in the book of life. Hence the prophecy must refer to a future and distinct Antichrist, who will have nothing to do with the Papacy.

Again, we have seen that the ten-horned Beast may sometimes be taken as referring to the Papacy ; hence the second Beast, the False Prophet, is the Roman clergy and Babylon is Papal Rome. But in describing the destruction of Babylon Revelation says : “ And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the whore [Babylon] and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire ; for God hath put it in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” If, then, we are to discern nothing but the Papacy in the prophecies of the Antichrist, these words tell us that the powers of Christendom

will lend their forces to the Pope in order that he may destroy his own city. This proposition is obviously as absurd as in the other instance noted above.

As a general rule, it is safe to assume that the prophecies contained in the greater part of the Apocalypse are concerned almost wholly with events future to the present. It is unsafe, and indeed dangerous, to put a wholly historical interpretation on any of them. The following example may be taken as showing the truth of this statement. The opening of the sixth seal is thus recorded: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

This mighty scene has been historically interpreted as symbolising the events connected with the conversion of the Emperor Constantine and the fall of Pagan Rome. Such an interpretation is obviously totally inadequate for so terrible a scene. We should expect that "the great day of His wrath" would be far more of an earth-shattering event than the conversion of an emperor of ancient Rome. If

that be such a day, then there is no need for us to concern ourselves with the future. The great day of His wrath amounts to nothing more than the conversion of an emperor and the rout of an army of pagans, so His wrath is obviously not worth while troubling about.

We admit that the conversion of Constantine may be regarded as a partial fulfilment of the prophecy, but we most distinctly do not admit that that event exhausted the significance of the prophecy. Those who do assert this are led still farther astray, for they regard the era of the seals as past, and tell us that we are in the period marked in Revelation as the outpouring of the vials of the wrath of God. And again the historical facts are utterly inadequate for such an historical interpretation.

We look, then, for a future and a more or less literal fulfilment of the greater portion of the prophecies contained in the Apocalypse, and therefore we look for a literal Antichrist who shall embody the features of those prophecies, and also sum up in his character and career all the other antichristian prophecies contained in the other portions of the Scriptures.

The events which we expect to see develop and come to pass in the near future are as follows :

(1) The development of the ten kingdoms signified by the ten horns of the Beast ;

(2) The appearance of an eleventh king who will subdue three of the others and ultimately become the head of a federation of the remaining kingdoms ;

(3) This king will make a treaty with the Jews ;

(4) He will violate this treaty after three and a half years ; and, as a result,

(5) The " great tribulation " will take place, and awful persecutions will continue for a further period of three and a half years ;

(6) Then the Jews will be converted and delivered from their sufferings ; and

(7) Christ will come in all His glory.

Those who do not look for the rise of an individual Antichrist make a great point of the fact that the modern tendency is not towards despotism, but towards democracy. They could understand the rise of such a ruler in the days of ancient Babylon, when the world was accustomed to absolute rulers, but they do not consider it possible that modern man, with his zeal for democratic institutions, would allow himself to fall under the sway of the greatest autocrat of all time. A moment's glance at the history of the world will dispose of the objection. All the great democratic movements have resulted in the rise of a despot. Cæsar owed his imperial throne to the mob. The French Revolution, which was heralded as the permanent establishment of the brotherhood of man, paved the way for Napoleon. And so it has always been. Man must have a leader. The genius with a commanding personality will always obtain power over those with less strong personalities. How true this is may be seen from all the democratic institutions which flourish to-day. In the great trades unions, for instance, we see the power concentrated either in a small clique of men or in one man who has risen from the masses by sheer force of personality. So it will be with the Antichrist. He will be a man of commanding personality, as statesman and military leader he will be a genius, he will possess infinite resource, and be consumed with a mighty ambition. The world, in spite of all its vaunted democratic ideals, will simply be unable to help itself. It will fall under his sway much as Rome fell under that of Cæsar, and France under that of Napoleon. He will out-Cæsar Cæsar.

It must not be forgotten that the Antichrist will

rise from a very small beginning. He will start as a mere man, and his meteoric rise to power will not take place until the Devil furnishes him with the necessary genius. This will be quite in keeping with our historical experience. At twenty-two Alexander of Macedon was the insignificant ruler of a petty Greek State. At twenty-eight he was founding an empire which altered the whole course of human history. The rise of Napoleon was even more suggestive of the rise of the Antichrist. Napoleon entered the military school at Brienne an unknown boy without the advantages of wealth, social position, or influence to help him. So obscure was his origin that he was only admitted to the school as a special favour to the Governor of Corsica, and the only reason that can be found for the Governor asking so great a favour for a lad of such lowly origin is that the great emperor was his illegitimate son. And yet this obscure youth became the terror of the world.

There is no reason why the events of a hundred years ago should not be repeated now or in the future. Indeed, it has been pointed out that the present would be more favourable for the rise of such a person than a century ago. "In proportion as the general standard of mental cultivation is raised, and man made equal with man, the ordinary power of genius is diminished, but its extraordinary power is increased, its reach deepened, its hold rendered more firm. As men become familiar with the achievements and the exercise of talent, they learn to despise and disregard its daily examples, and to be more independent of mere men of ability; but they only become more completely in the power of gigantic intellect, and the slaves of pre-eminent and unapproachable talent."

By the sheer force of his transcendent genius, then, the Antichrist will gain pre-eminence over mankind.

At first he will be the patron of religion, but afterward he will show himself in his true colours, and will become the most relentless persecutor of religion that the world has ever known.

He will plunge the world into darkness, so that the faithful will ask whether there be a God who can permit such things to be. In those days of trial and tribulation there will be only one light left for the guidance and comfort of man. And that light will be the prophecies of the Bible. These will tell us, even in the day of our sorest affliction, that such things were foreordained by God and that they had to be. But they will also promise to those who remain steadfast and dare to prefer Christ to Antichrist that the glorious second coming of the Saviour is at hand. Then will He be a Saviour indeed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CAREER OF THE ANTICHRIST

IN broad outline the career of the Antichrist can be easily sketched from the Book of Revelation. For a long time he will be living among the people of the earth without their guessing his true identity. Indeed, he will enjoy three and a half years of power before the world will wake up to the fact that he is the terror that was predicted in the Scriptures. Here we notice a remarkable similarity between the lives of Christ and Antichrist. The Saviour lived for years on the earth without His identity being recognised. And when He did proclaim Who He was none were more surprised than those who had known Him all His life. So it will be with the Antichrist. At first men will talk about him as a remarkably bright boy, and will doubtless draw much satisfaction from the fact that the lad lives in such an enlightened age as kindly provides him with free education and every encouragement to develop his abilities to the full. To many a youth Antichrist will be held up as an example of what perseverance will do. So he will proceed on his path towards power. In time he will become a champion of democracy. That has always been the surest means of climbing to power over one's fellow men. Liberty is a magic word which will always collect a crowd of adherents, although few of them will have even the vaguest notion of the thing they are seeking.

Where shall we look for this youth who will be claimed as a typical production of our democratic age? Prophecy points to somewhere within the boundaries of the empire of Alexander the Great. In interpreting the vision of Daniel, the archangel Gabriel predicts the formation of four kingdoms out of the empire of Alexander, and then goes on to say: "In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy, also, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many. He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." From this it is clear that he will arise somewhere in the Near East. We also know that he will not be found in Syria or Egypt, for the prophecies tell that he will fight the kings of those countries. He will therefore arise somewhere in Greece or in the countries around Constantinople. One of the Balkan States would thus seem to be a likely place.

But, wherever his birthplace may be, this champion of democracy will gradually rise to greater and greater power. He will not only be the champion of the people but also of religion, and will thus deceive many more into blindly following him. In the course of his rise he is aided by his trusty lieutenant, the False Prophet. In this person we discern the features of Judas Iscariot. From the description of his appearance on the scene of this mighty drama it would appear that he is some person resurrected from the dead. "And behold, another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon"

(Rev. xiii. 11). Certainly no fitter person could be chosen as the lieutenant of the false Christ than the false apostle of the True Christ. Moreover, Judas is often referred to in the Bible, as is also the Beast, as "the son of perdition." And Christ Himself characterised him as being possessed of a devil: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you hath a devil?" (John vi. 70). Hence, it would not be surprising if Judas were to be the False Prophet of the Antichrist.

Thanks to their transcendent genius, their sway over men continually increases. For three and a half years they enjoy almost unlimited power and the world little guesses to whom it has entrusted itself. Then suddenly its eyes are opened, and it sees its rulers in their true light.

The two witnesses appear. It has been suggested that these two will be Elijah, who has never tasted death, and Moses, whose body has never been subjected to corruption. But, whoever they may be, they appear before Antichrist and denounce him. In his rage he kills them. He casts aside his mask. No longer is he the champion of the people and of religion. He sets himself up in the place of God, and forces men to worship. He deluges the world with blood. For a further three and a half years this time of terror continues.

And then Christ comes.

But when we come to attempt to obtain a more detailed portrait of the Antichrist, we are faced with many difficulties, due chiefly to the diversity of the separate facets of this remarkable personality.

In the course of the Scriptures Antichrist is referred to by no less than twenty-two names, and practically every prophet gives us a different view of him. In the Book of Daniel he is referred to as The Prince, The Little Horn, The Wilful King, The Deso-

lator, The King of the North, and The King of Fierce Countenance ; in Zechariah as The Idol Shepherd ; in Ezekiel as The Prince of Tyrus, The Assyrian, and The Prince of Meshech and Tubal ; in Isaiah as The King of Babylon, The Assyrian, The Spoiler, and The Treacherous Dealer ; the Apostle Paul refers to him as The Man of Sin, The Son of Perdition, and The Wicked One ; Jeremiah as The King of Sheshack ; Micah as the Breaker ; John the Evangelist as The Antichrist ; in Revelation as The Beast ; and in the Psalms as The Lawless One and The Head over Many Countries.

The difficulty of blending all these portraits into one harmonious whole has led many to regard them as referring to several separate persons. Some think that there are two Antichrists, others that there are three or more. They hold that there are several portraits of the various types of the Antichrist that have arisen in the past, and that there is a further portrait of the final Antichrist who will embody all the worst features of the previous aspirants for the name. This, however, does not fit in with the schemes of the prophecies. They must all be regarded as referring to the same man, in spite of their seeming diversity and contrariety. It is not in the least surprising that it should be difficult to give a clear and concise statement of the character and career of the man. Indeed, that it should be so is in full accord with the generality of such prophecies. It would be impossible to imagine a more contradictory set of prophecies than those which relate to the first coming of Christ. Did not history come to our aid, we should have to give up the interpretation of them in despair. But in the light of history all the various and seemingly contradictory prophecies fit in one with the other like the pieces of an intricate mosaic and form a perfect whole. So it will doubtless be in the case of the

Antichrist. We may despair of ever being able to fit the pieces of the mosaic together and obtain a clear portrait of this supremely interesting personage until history comes to our aid and actual events show us how to fit them together. The purpose of prophecy is not to provide us with a detailed photograph of the future, but to sketch it in broad outline in order to fix our attention on certain important events, to prove that the hand of God continually guides the course of the world's history, and to encourage and support us in faith.

That all the prophecies referring to the various persons who are called by the names mentioned above actually refer to the great Antichrist and not to earlier manifestations of the same spirit is clear from the fact that in nearly all of them the time when he will rise to power is either definitely stated or else plainly hinted at. The prophecies of Daniel all have definite chronological periods assigned to them, and in all the others the spirit of the context justifies us in the assumption that the realisation of the words of the prophet must be looked for in the latter days.

That the Antichrist will be a man of low birth, with no reputation or dignity to lose and no tradition to restrain him, is shown in the eleventh chapter of Daniel. "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom; but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And with the arms of a flood they shall be overflown from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully; for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them

the prey, and spoil, and riches ; yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strongholds, even for a time." Here we have the man and his methods. Low-born, without conscience and without honour, but full of ambition and craft, he insinuates himself into the esteem of men. He flatters and cajoles. He appears as a friend, but the force of his personality transforms friendship into dominion. Men cannot pierce the mask of cunning which hides his true character. They think that he is all that he appears to be on the surface. He appears to be animated by such noble ideals, his projects and schemes all seem to bear the stamp of humanity. They little guess what inky blackness lies below. They accept him as a reformer, a man who will bring about a new Utopia, if only they will trust him and help him in his mission of bettering the world. The whole tragedy of man is his zeal for judging by appearances only, and accepting every strange thing at its face value. That ineradicable habit has always been used by Satan as a means of enticing man away from God. He used the same trick to deceive Eve ; he used it again to deceive the Jews ; he has used it to deceive every human being who has ever walked this earth. And, in spite of all man's bitter experiences, he will use it again, and it will serve his hideous ends as successfully as when he first deceived Eve with the luscious appearance of the fruit.

By these means the Antichrist will become rich, and will find himself at the head of some State, probably a small one. By the same means that he has employed to obtain power over his fellow-countrymen, he will gain predominance over the surrounding States. The greatest and most unscrupulous diplomatist that the world has ever been cursed with, he will gradually bring other nations under his thrall. His spies will be at work in every land stirring up em-

barrassments and whittling at their power. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, he will bring off a smart coup. By alliances and treaties his power will extend; sometimes he will display more daring, and will show signs of aggression. But his aggression will be in a good cause, at least to all outward appearances. His plea will always be that he is extending his beneficent rule for the sake of bringing liberty to the oppressed and light to those who are in darkness. That blessed word "civilisation" will be ever on his lips.

At first the great Powers of the world will watch his progress with sympathy. Men will look back on the bad old days when these petty States of Europe were sunk in comparative savagery. They will remember how brigands used to be found in them; they will remember the previous degraded state of the people, and how they used to have neither trade nor culture. And they will congratulate themselves on the rapid strides with which the human race is advancing, and will look forward to the coming Millennium of man. But after a time the Antichrist will begin to get a little too powerful to please the great nations. Instead of regarding him as an enlightened man worthy of encouragement in his efforts to improve the state of his countrymen, they will begin to see in him a rival. He will have become a person of such importance that he will seem to claim admittance to their own select circle.

Finally, he appears as the friend of the Jews. He restores to them their lands, makes a nation of them again, and enters into a treaty with them. The result of this move will be that he will gain control over the people in whose hands are the world's finances. Imagine the position of any of the great Powers to-day if the Jews, with their vast financial interests, were to suddenly withdraw to Palestine, form themselves

into a nation, and ally themselves with a rapidly rising Power. There is not a country in the world in which the predominant financial power is not in the hands of the Jews. The position will be the same in the days of the Antichrist. His master-stroke will cause financial chaos in every quarter of the globe, credits will come tumbling down, every Bourse will be stricken with panic. But the Antichrist will have gained control over the greater portion of the world's wealth.

There can be only one result of such a state of affairs. War will break out. The first Power to draw swords with the Antichrist appears to be the King of the South. This is Egypt. Egypt will not be an independent power then any more than she is at present. There is every reason to assume that the land of the Pharaohs will be under its present Government, that of Britain. Hence it may well be that Britain will be the first Power to come to blows with the Antichrist. Whoever he may prove to be, the King of the South is defeated. The Antichrist will give the world more than a hint that he is a great military commander as well as a great diplomatist.

This war with the King of the South is described by Daniel. "And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow; and many shall fall down slain. . . . Then shall he [Antichrist] return to his land with great riches." It will be observed that the downfall of the King of the South is in large measure due to the "devices" of his opponent and to the treachery of those about him. The Antichrist, therefore, will have built up a marvellous system of espionage which

will more than make up for the inferiority of his forces in point of numbers.

On his return to his own country at the head of his victorious troops it would appear that the Antichrist makes up his mind to break his treaty with the Jews at some future date. "And his heart shall be against the holy covenant."

Having thus proved himself a military commander of some consequence, the Antichrist will continue his warlike exploits. He would seem to extend his dominion eastwards towards Babylon, which city he will doubtless cause to be rebuilt, if that has not already been accomplished by that date. As a result of these wars many will be slain.

The world will now realise that it has to deal with its old bugbear, the would-be emperor of the earth. It will see in the Antichrist a fresh imitator of Cæsar, and it will prepare to deal with him as it previously dealt with Napoleon and the Kaiser Wilhelm II. At the head of the combination against the new disturber of the world's peace will be the King of the South, anxious to preserve the liberties of the world and to avenge his previous defeat. Here, again, we note the similarity between the King of the South and Britain. Britain was chiefly instrumental in smashing the high hopes of Napoleon; it is now taking a leading part in the process of shattering the dreams of the Kaiser. It would be in keeping with the past, therefore, if she were also to take the lead in defending the world against the onslaught of the Antichrist.

Daniel tells us that in this war the "ships of Chittim shall grieve" the Antichrist. Chittim is the Biblical name for Cyprus, at present a British possession, and so the phrase "ships of Chittim" may well be a reference to the British Navy. In any case, the Antichrist is defeated, as is described by Ezekiel. "Son of man, say unto the Prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the

Lord God ; Behold, thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas ; but thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God : Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel ; there is no secret that they can hide from thee : with thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures : by thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches. Therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations ; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas."

The Antichrist, then, is not only defeated, but killed. All the prophecies seem to agree on this point. Revelation tells us that one of the horns of the beast was "wounded unto death" ; and Zechariah gives an account of the wounds which cause his death. "The sword shall be upon his arm ; and upon his eye ; his arm shall be clean dried up and his right eye shall be utterly darkened."

At first sight this death of the Antichrist seems to be an insuperable difficulty, for obviously at the time of the event he has hardly begun to fulfil his destiny. But the words of Daniel provide the clue to the solution of the difficulty. "Thou art a man." Up to this point the Antichrist has been an ordinary human being, he has not yet been provided with supernatural power by Satan. He has been a man of immense genius, a worthy successor of Napoleon, but, like Napoleon, only a man. His genius and personality have raised him from obscurity to power, and his head has been turned. He has become a megalomaniac. He has considered himself superior to the

rest of mankind. His ambitions have increased with this rise to power. He has fallen into the habit of thinking himself a god. It will be noted that the prophecy clearly indicates that he has not proclaimed himself a god to the world, but that he has only considered himself one. But he is only a very clever man, and so must suffer for his presumption. He is killed and goes down into the pit. And it is at this point that the Evil One invests him with his supernatural power and sends him back to earth as the incarnation of evil.

Isaiah gives a description of the descent of the spirit of the Antichrist into hell. "He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing. Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. And they shall speak and shall say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. They that see shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?"

That entrance of the Antichrist into hell is one of the most striking scenes recorded in the Scriptures. We see the millions who have been slain as a result of the Antichrist's dreams of world-power, and the millions whom he has oppressed and afflicted, rising in a body to meet him. We see them surging round him, forgetting their own torments in the pleasure of

hurling curses at the man who has brought them to their doom, and who is now reduced to the same level of wretchedness as themselves. We turn with a shudder from the scene of horror.

The thirteenth chapter gives an account of the return of the Antichrist to earth, after being invested by Satan with his hideous power. "The beast that thou sawest was and is not ; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition, and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

The Antichrist that goes down into hell after being killed on the field of battle is a man ; the Antichrist who is spued back from hell to earth again is a devil. He is no longer the crafty, smooth-faced schemer, no longer does he cajole and flatter. There is no need for such methods. He can declare before all the world exactly who he is. He knows that none on earth can harm him, for he has received power from the Prince of Evil himself. And he knows, moreover, that he has but a short time in which to make use of his power. He knows that Christ will come and destroy him utterly in the fullness of time, and he is determined to indulge in one last mad orgy of writhing evil before his Destroyer visits vengeance upon him.

His treaty with the Jews is broken, torn up as a meaningless scrap of paper. By that treaty the Antichrist not only recognised the Jews as a nation, but also, doubtless, gave special protection to their religion. Possibly he made them a present of a magnificent rebuilt temple, perhaps an even more splendid affair than that of Solomon. But the devil is now come into his own, and all semblance of religion is stopped and the "abomination of desolation" is set up.

Many of the Jews will doubtless realise who the Antichrist is; they will see that his number is six hundred, three score, and six. They will rise up in revolt against the monster; but he is all-powerful, and their efforts come to naught. This is indicated by the eleventh chapter of Daniel: "And they that understand among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end, for it is yet for a time appointed." These will be blessed words in those dark days. They will tell the world that, although Antichrist shall rage and destroy and ravage and carry freemen into captivity, yet God is watching all the time, and that those who fall because they prefer Christ to Antichrist shall receive their due recompense after a little while.

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he will exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished." Antichrist will go on from triumph to triumph. He enthrones himself in the splendid temple he built for the Jews in Jerusalem as the supreme God. He insolently orders the world to fall down and worship him. Cowed by his might, many terror-stricken souls will bow before him. But they shall not avoid his rage against every living thing. They will be treated as slaves, harried and oppressed. Those who refuse to worship the Antichrist will draw down upon themselves the full fury of his military might. At the head of his gigantic army, an army such as the world has never seen before, and equipped with all the hellish inspirations of the Devil himself, Antichrist will carry carnage from one end of the earth to the other. The whole world

will lie crushed, bleeding and shrieking in agony beneath his iron heel. God will seem to have turned His face away from man.

Ezekiel gives us a picture of the shambles into which Antichrist will transform the world. "Wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth with them that go down into the pit. They shall fall in the midst of them that are slain by the sword : she is delivered to the sword : draw her and all her multitudes. The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him ; they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword. Asshur is there and all her company : his graves are about him ; all of them slain, fallen by the sword : whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave : all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living. There is Elam and all her multitudes round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living ; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit. They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitudes ; all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword. There is Meshech, Tubal and all her multitude : her graves are round about him : all of them slain, fallen by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living. There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which with their might are laid low by them that were slain with the sword : they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit. There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain ; with their terror they are

ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with them that be slain with the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit. Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword."

Thus will all the great Powers, once the terrors of the earth, be humbled to the dust before the Antichrist. Their armies will be routed and millions slain. The earth will be covered with corpses. Hell will become so full that even Pharaoh, who dared obstruct the will of God, will be comforted.

Antichrist will not pause for an instant in his course of carnage. Without warning he will swoop down first on this nation and then on that. He will make war for the sole purpose of shedding blood and adding to the toll of human misery. "And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?"

Scattered and desolated, the peoples of the earth will seek to form a confederacy against the Antichrist. But they will be unable to marshal their forces, and he will come down against them like a whirlwind, and they will be scattered worse than before. Nevertheless he will never crush all opposition out of

existence; there will always be some forlorn hope for the world.

But the end is near. After achieving a further great victory over the King of the South the Antichrist receives some bad news from the east and north. What these tidings are we are not told, but he evidently realises their import and he hurries back with his host to Palestine.

With his tremendous army drawn from every nation of the earth he lays siege to Jerusalem and soon captures it. "I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

Thus will Jerusalem be sacked again and the horrors attending the fall of the city shall be even worse than those of the year A.D. 70. But it is the last triumph of the Antichrist. His hour is at hand. His host is suddenly afflicted with a noisome plague which carries off his soldiers by the hundred thousand. In a frenzy of rage Antichrist challenges God to do His worst.

Christ appears. Nature is convulsed. The Mount of Olives is split in two, the hills are levelled, the Dead Sea is raised, and a mighty river gushes through the streets of Jerusalem and washes away the awful results of the sack of the town. The hosts of the Antichrist are slain before the brightness of the Lord. "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

The immensity of the Antichrist's army and the completeness of his fall may be judged from the words of Ezekiel. "And they that dwell in the cities of

Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years ; so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests ; for they shall burn the weapons with fire ; and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea : and it shall stop the noses of the passengers : and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude : and they shall call it the valley of Hamon Gog. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying them, that they may cleanse the land."

As for the Antichrist, he will be taken alive, judged, and cast into the lake of fire, " which is the second death."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE KAISER AS ANTICHRIST

IN the early days of the Church the Christians proved to themselves that Nero was the terrible Antichrist. Later, Lactantius, in his "*De Mortibus Persecutorum*," refers to a belief that Nero the matricide was in hiding and that in the latter days he would reappear and would ravage, slay, and destroy. A hundred years ago many maintained that Napoleon was the Beast. To-day many are diligently studying the Scriptures and finding evidence that the Kaiser is the man of sin whom all the world is awaiting. In view of what has been said in the previous chapter we may state with confidence that it is more than doubtful whether the Kaiser is the real Antichrist. He has not risen from a humble position, and there are several characteristics of the true Antichrist which we are thankful to note he does not possess. Nevertheless, it is well to study the evidence that has been brought forward in support of the theory that Wilhelm II is the Beast of Revelation. We know that the Antichrist will arise sooner or later, and we have good reason to believe that within a comparatively short time the world will be groaning under his heel. We are at the end of the dispensation and near to the second coming of Christ, and we know from our Bibles that the Antichrist will be inflicted on us by Satan immediately before that glorious event. It is essential, therefore, that the world

should be on the watch for the Beast. The faithful, who will be able to recognise his features, will be able to take steps for safeguarding their own and the salvation of their friends. They must watch for the Antichrist as warily as they watch hopefully for the coming of Christ, lest they be taken unawares and their faith is destroyed.

The fact that much evidence has been brought forward in support of the theory that the Kaiser is Antichrist shows that he possesses at least some of the characteristics of that remarkable personality. We know, too, that Napoleon and Nero also possessed many of those characteristics. Hence by uniting our experience of past and present imitation Antichrists we may be able to gain a clear conception of what the real Antichrist will be like.

For years past the nightmare of Europe has been the prospect of war. All the nations seem to have taken the words of the prophet to heart and have been preparing with feverish haste for "the day." "Prepare war, stirring up the mighty men. Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears." Untold millions which might have been wisely spent in the furtherance of the happiness of the human race have been cast into the mouth of Baal. It would indeed seem that the earth was preparing for the onslaught of the Antichrist.

In the sixth chapter of the Book of Revelation we read concerning the opening of the seals : " And there went out another horse that was red : and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another ; and there was given to him a great sword." Here we have a description of the great war-lord. The red horse on which he is seated represents bloodshed, and the sword that is given him is military power.

How effectively he takes away peace from the earth is shown at the opening of the next two seals, when a black horse and a pale horse issue forth, representing famine and pestilence. Hence the wars foreshadowed by the opening of the second seal are no ordinary conflicts, but world-wide wars which devastate the earth and cause great misery and suffering. The rapidity with which one seal is opened after another would also seem to indicate that famine and pestilence will follow quickly in the wake of war and that food prices will rise rapidly. It will also be noticed that the rider of the red horse is to "take peace from the earth"; in other words, he will provoke war without any just reason. Obviously the war indicated by the seals will be very similar to the present war, which has been brazenly provoked by the Kaiser, is world-wide, has caused infinite suffering in Belgium and northern France, and has resulted in the rapid rise in the prices of food.

The fact that the war would be a war of pure aggression was also foreshadowed by Isaiah, who gives a vivid picture of the rapid advance of the Antichrist hosts. "Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands and all thy people with thee. And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages. I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without wars, and having neither bars nor gates. To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thy hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited. Thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou and many people with thee, a great company and a mighty army." This is an exact description of the events of the past few months. The Kaiser came out from his place in the north, with his mighty army, the greatest and most splendidly equipped that the world has yet seen,

and made an unprovoked attack on the unwalled towns and villages of Belgium and France and the inhabitants who were at rest.

The prophet Daniel describes the Antichrist as The King of Fierce Countenance. A glance at the Kaiser's portrait will show that he has carefully cultivated a fierce expression. His upturned moustaches, his pursed, drooping lips, and perpetual frown are all calculated to give the impression of the great war lord. The little horn of Daniel was also, we are told, "more stout than his fellows." Here again the description fits the Kaiser. Neither King George nor the Tsar nor any of the monarchs of Europe has the same "stout" and martial appearance as the Kaiser. He is always the soldier, even when he is in civil dress one can almost hear the clink of spurs; but the others in comparison look like real, honest, peaceable gentlemen.

The Antichrist is to be strong-willed. "And the king shall do according to his will." The Kaiser has been described as the most wilful monarch in Europe. The Antichrist is to speak great things against God, and he is to magnify and exalt himself. Again the Kaiser is foreshadowed. All his public utterances go to prove the self-exaltation of the man and the fact that he considers himself practically the equal of the Almighty.

The Antichrist is to gain power chiefly by the use of unscrupulous methods. He will "corrupt by flatteries." Here again is the Kaiser. A vast portion of his power is due to the amazing system of espionage, the ramifications of which have spread over the whole earth. Everywhere, within Germany and without, the secret-service agents of the Kaiser have been at work, covertly preparing for the realisation of their master's dreams of world power.

The Kaiser has been described as the most con-

summate flatterer in existence. He is well acquainted with the arts and devices with which the Antichrist will rise from obscurity to fame. Everything to which the Kaiser puts his hand, even the present war, is hailed as a service to the cause of Civilisation. He poses as a man of a deeply religious nature, although his words and deeds prove that his only god is Baal, the god of blood and iron ; he prates of culture, when his dreams are always ruin and desolation. On the occasion of his visits to England fair speech has come trippingly from his tongue, and many have been deceived and have regarded him as the true friend of mankind and peace. Now we see him in his true colours. The man who professed such undying love and admiration of the English stands and smiles approval on his troops as they sing "The Song of Hate against England" in his honour.

The Kaiser also possesses the number of the Beast. He was born on January 27th, 1859. On January 27th, 1914, he was just 660 months old and 6 months later the war broke out. From the date of his birth to the opening of the great war in which he has flung down his challenge to fate was within a few days of 666 months. Moreover, in the words "Der Kaiser Wilhelm II" there are eighteen letters or $6 + 6 + 6$.

The first beast of Revelation has seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns, making twenty-seven separate features combined in one beast. There are exactly twenty-seven kingdoms, arch-duchies, principalities, and dependencies in the German Empire. They are Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg, Baden, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Saxe-Weimar, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Oldenburg, Brunswick, Saxe-Meiningen, Saxe-Altenburg, Coburg and Gotha, Anhalt, Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, Waldeck-Pyrmont, Reuss (elder branch), Reuss (younger branch), Schaumburg-Lippe, Lippe,

Lubeck, Bremen, Hamburg, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Colonies.

There are, then, a number of likenesses between the Kaiser and the Antichrist. But there is one characteristic of the latter which is lacking in the Kaiser, or at any rate has not been evinced up to the present. And that is the fact that the Antichrist will be a military genius. He will be something more than a capable general : he will be greater than Cæsar, or Napoleon, or Alexander, or any of the great military captains of the world. Events have shown that the Kaiser does not possess this pre-eminent genius. He has prepared the mightiest military machine the world has seen, but he cannot utilise it to the full. If Napoleon had had a quarter of the Kaiser's military resources and advantages he would have been an Antichrist indeed. When the Corsican aimed at the domination of the world, France and Europe were exhausted after the great Revolution. The Kaiser has had innumerable advantages over Napoleon. He has enjoyed a period of remarkable material prosperity, and has had time in which to make the most detailed preparations. The time and the opportunity are his, but he has not the genius to snatch them.

We must conclude, then, that he is not Antichrist. He is merely a man possessing some of the characteristics of the Antichrist. But if we imagine a blend of Napoleon and Kaiser, then we have an idea of what the real Antichrist will be like.

CHAPTER XXX

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE FAITHFUL ?

IN view of the devastating career of the Antichrist it may well be asked whether at the end of his domination there will be any faithful servants of Christ left. His relentless power and pitiless persecution would not seem to permit of even a handful of believers escaping to welcome the Lord on His return.

But God has always provided a sanctuary for His servants. Elijah was hidden and sustained when escape seemed impossible. Obadiah fed the prophets in the cave and kept them safe from the clutches of Ahab. Will it not also be thus during the last dark awful days that are to come ?

In the eleventh chapter of Daniel there is an explicit statement that there will be a sanctuary provided to which the faithful may flee and remain safe from the impious rage of Antichrist. "But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." Will it be possible for these lands to form a haven of refuge for the believers ?

Edom is the name of the country in which Esau settled and which was the birthplace of the Turkish nation. It is also referred to in the Bible as Idumea. The ancient inhabitants of the land were the Horites of Genesis, their name indicating that they were cave-dwellers. Esau became their ruler, and they developed into a warlike people who were also re-

nowned for their scientific achievements. Jeremiah speaks of the "wise men of Edom." Bozrah is another name under which the district is known in Scripture. About the third century before Christ the Edomites became incorporated with the Jews. The Herods were Edomites.

The capital of the country, according to Josephus, was called Petra. At one time it had a vast commerce and was the metropolis of Arabia. Then, with the fall of the Roman Empire, Petra fell into decay and passed from the memory of man. It was not rediscovered until a century ago, when Buckhardt, disguised as an Arab, managed to trace the position of the lost city. He was the first to set foot within it for centuries. A marvellous sight met his gaze. There stood the city exactly as it had been left. There were the palaces of kings, princes, and merchants, the houses of the rich and the cottages of the poor, all standing in a state of perfect preservation. Silent and deserted, the city was waiting for the faithful who are to find a sanctuary beneath the shadow of the surrounding hills and mountains.

How excellently the city is situated for a haven of refuge is apparent to all who have gazed on its deserted streets. There is only one entrance to the city, and that a long and narrow defile through the mountains. It could be held against the mightiest army by a mere handful of men. On all sides are precipitous cliffs which render approach by any other route impossible. A veritable city of caves has been hewn out of these cliffs. Some of these caves would accommodate a hundred people with ease. These marvellous caves at one time served doubtless as tombs.

Edom is desolate to-day just as the prophet Ezekiel predicted. "I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. . . . Thus will

I make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth." These words have received a complete fulfilment. The palaces, temples, theatres, which will seat 3,000 persons, and all the other buildings, are not only desolate, but are practically unknown to man.

No travellers cross the desert wastes which now separate Edom from Palestine. These deserts will support neither man nor beast, and are swept by winds and storms. Man visits Edom at his peril. But its cities are still standing, as they stood centuries ago. They are waiting for those whom the persecutions of the Antichrist will cause to flee across the deserts. They will find them ready.

Moab is a more familiar name to students of the Bible. It is a country about fifty miles long and twenty broad, lying to the east of the Dead Sea. Most of the country comprises a plateau some three thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Moab was at first a thorn in the side of Israel. At one time the Moabite kings held the Israelites in thrall. Later, the story of Ruth lends interest to the land.

With the rise of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar the Moabites pass out of history. But there is still evidence of their wealth and greatness. There are hundreds of ruined cities and villages to be found throughout the land. Many of them point to the wealth and splendour of their former inhabitants. The chief street of Gerash, over a mile long, was lined with immense columns, three hundred of which are standing to this day. At Rabbath Ammon there are the ruins of a theatre which at one time could have accommodated no less than ten thousand spectators. All these prove that the land of Moab once could boast of its teeming population. During Roman times it had its own Bishop, but with the fall of the empire the prophecies were fulfilled. The

land became desolate, even as desolation came upon Edom. A few wandering Arabs shift their tents from place to place, but the land is silent. Its rich soil is uncultivated and its cities are tenantless.

But there is one more prophecy to be fulfilled in regard to the land of Moab. "I will bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days; the remnant of My people shall possess them; they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." Then will the sanctuary be prepared.

The third land mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel is that of Ammon. The Ammonites were a remarkable people, and preserved their independence throughout the days of the Old Testament and for long afterwards. The Israelites under Jephthah and David, the Assyrians, and the Egyptians all attempted to break their power, but all failed. The Romans were unable to conquer them completely. It was not until the invasion of the Saracens in the seventh century that Ammon finally fell.

The land of Ammon lies on the east of Palestine, and in spite of its present desolation there is abundant evidence as to the natural fertility of the land. It could easily have supported the vast population which we know was to be found within its borders in the old days. The ruins of magnificent cities and towns are to be found everywhere.

It will be noted that such inhabitants as these deserted lands possess are a few wandering Arabs. This is significant of the days to come. The Arab may be a knave, he will rob without the slightest scruple. But he has his code of honour. He will always give hospitality to a stranger, even if he robs him afterwards, and he will never betray those to whom he gives hospitality. The emissaries of the

Antichrist will not learn from the Arabs that thousands of fugitives are in hiding in the desolate ruins beyond the deserts.

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation there is a description of the flight of the woman from the Beast. "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. . . . And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."

We can almost see this scene. The faithful remnant of Israel flee over the wilderness towards the desolate cities beyond. The Antichrist sends a mighty host in pursuit of the fugitives. But mighty hosts are no avail against sand-swept deserts. The horses and artillery of the pursuers sink in the sand. Progress becomes slower and slower. The mighty army is tortured with thirst, and its provisions are exhausted. The fugitives escape. The remnant of the army will straggle back, and it will be assumed that the fugitives have suffered the same fate as the vast majority of their pursuers, and have perished in the desert. In the desolate cities of Moab and Edom and Ammon they will remain in safe hiding, secluded from the horrors that are being perpetrated in the outer world. They will be forgotten by man in the whirling terror of the time. But God will remember their existence, and will guard them with never-failing watchfulness.

It has been objected that the fugitives, assuming that they reach the shelter of the cities of these lands, will in all probability die of starvation. In these

desolate cities they will find rest, but neither food nor drink. True, the soil is extraordinarily fertile, but the circumstances attending their flight will doubtless preclude their taking any agricultural implements with them. And, in any case, it would be some time before the land would produce sufficient food to support any number of people.

In the first place, nothing is impossible to the God who fed Israel during the forty years' wandering in the wilderness. And the Scriptures tell us that the fugitives will be fed. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him: his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isa. xxxiii. 15-17). Again, "He calleth to me out of Seir [Edom], Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. The inhabitants of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty; they prevented with their bread him that had fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war" (Isa. xxi. 11-15).

There are many obvious objections to these suggestions as to the cities of refuge. For instance, the Antichrist will doubtless have an ample fleet of aircraft at his disposal. Nevertheless, the prophecies undoubtedly indicate that some refuge for the faithful will be provided, its exact position and nature being, for obvious reasons, hidden until the time of necessity arrives.

CHAPTER XXXI

ARMAGEDDON

No word is being used more loosely at the present time than Armageddon. The war is continually being referred to under this name, especially by those who seem to have only the vaguest idea as to what the word actually means. Only recently one of the leading newspapers spoke of Armageddon as if it were in some way connected with the fall of Troy. Those who read their Bibles know that this war is not Armageddon, for the very good reason that that great battle will be the greatest of those fought during the career of the Antichrist; and, as that person has not yet arrived upon the scene, it is impossible for the battle to be fought until some years to come.

If, however, we restrict our view of the Antichrist to the symbolical embodiment of the prophecies in the Church of Rome, it is clear that the war marks the beginning of a series of conflicts which will culminate in the battle of Armageddon.

In the view, then, of the historical method of interpretation, the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet who are to bring about the final war of Armageddon are Satan, the Papacy, and the Roman priesthood. History tells of many wars which were stirred up by Papal Rome, and hence it may indeed be possible that, with her vast organisation, she will cause history to repeat itself. It has even been

asserted that Rome is responsible for the present war. The Kaiser has been referred to by the Pope as "my best friend in Europe." Certainly the relations between the Vatican and Potsdam have always been of a cordial nature. When the Kaiser visited Rome in 1903 he was received by the Pope in full state. A Te Deum was sung in St. Peter's on the occasion of the Emperor's birthday, who in return distributed decorations amongst the cardinals and made a present to the Pontiff of a cross, gleaming with gold and many gems. Rome has for years been looking to a great European conflict to provide her with the means of regaining her lost power and prestige. This is amply proved by the words of Cardinal Manning: "There is only one solution to the difficulty, a solution, I fear, impending, and that is, the terrible scourge of a continental war, a war which will exceed the horrors of any of the wars of the First Empire. And it is my firm belief that, in spite of all obstacles, the Vicar of Jesus Christ will be put again in his own rightful place. But that day will not be until his adversaries will have crushed each other with mutual destruction." With this avowed intention who can guess how much encouragement the Kaiser has received from Rome in the building of his dreams of world-power?

From Ezekiel and Zechariah we learn that, in this last great war of Armageddon, there will be a confederacy of nations under the King of the North on the one side, and a similar confederacy under the King of the South on the other. The northern forces will invade Palestine and the armies of the southern will oppose his progress.

The chief of the northern confederacy is spoken of as Gog, "of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal." Many have taken this to be an allusion to Russia, the Colossus of the north. It

will be noted that there is a distinct similarity between the words Rosh and Russia, Meshech and Muscovy, and between Tubal and Tobolsk. As to the southern confederacy, the leading spirit of this will be "the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof." This has been taken to indicate Britain and her colonies. Tarshish is the modern Gibraltar, and in the days of the Old Testament was the great commercial metropolis of the world. Hither was brought all the produce of Western Europe and Northern Africa. Solomon obtained much of the material for the building of the Temple from the port. The word Tarshish lost its local significance, and became a common expression for commercial pre-eminence. Hence Britain, the greatest maritime and commercial Power, is the modern Tarshish. In the Bible, too, the expression King of the South usually denotes Egypt. It is obviously highly improbable that Egypt will ever be an independent Power capable of leading a military confederacy against such a powerful opponent as Russia. But it is remarkable how the course of events has practically forced Britain to take possession of Egypt. Her vast trade and overseas interests forced her to control the Suez Canal; now the treachery of the late Khedive has forced her to depose him and to take formal possession of the land of the Pharaohs. May we say that we see the guiding hand of God in these events which have made Egypt British? In any case, the present state of affairs would strengthen the supposition that Britain is both the King of the South and the "merchants of Tarshish with all the young lions thereof" who are to lead the southern confederacy against the northern invaders.

How will Britain fare in this war of Armageddon? We may first consider how she deserves to fare. There are many national sins which may be men-

tioned. There is the opium traffic. Britain has been the means of introducing the drink curse in many corners of the earth. Then there is the decay of religion and the tendency to hanker after reunion with Rome. And there are many other grievous faults. We may expect, then, that Britain will be punished for her sins, and the usual punishment which God inflicts on a sinful people is defeat by their enemies.

This is what the Scriptures would appear to indicate as actually happening. The northern confederacy will inflict severe reverses on the southern armies in Egypt. "The king of the north shall come against him as a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships." It would seem to be a case of Germany and Belgium over again. That the King of the North will have a mighty force at his disposal is clear. "Horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour, a great company with buckler and shields, all of them handling swords." "Thou shalt ascend, thou shalt come like a storm, thou shalt come like a cloud to cover the land, and all thy hordes, and many peoples with thee." "Thou shalt come from thy place out of the uttermost parts of the north, thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army."

The King of the North would thus seem to make an irresistible advance, like a cloud, through Palestine and into Egypt. Then it will be that the Israelites will flee to their places of refuge in the deserted cities across the deserts, and the conquering king, intent on the spoils to be won in Egypt, will not turn aside to subdue them.

The next event would seem to be a crushing defeat of the southern forces in Egypt, as a result of which all the treasures of the land will fall into the hands of the

King of the North. At the present moment those treasures are insignificant, but it is impossible to say how Egypt will develop commercially under British rule. The prophecies indicate that the treasures will be of immense value. This will be quite possible. Egypt occupies a most advantageous position for becoming a large commercial centre. On the highway to the East and at the junction of three continents, she may well develop into a clearing-house for the world's trade. At any rate, it is quite possible that the future wealth of the country will attain the proportions indicated by the prophecies.

But in the midst of his triumph the King of the North will receive serious news from the north and east. What these tidings are we are not told exactly, but it is possible to hazard a guess at their import by studying the state of affairs. Russia has invaded Palestine, swept aside all opposition, and has gained possession of Egypt. The obvious tactics to be pursued by the southern confederacy is to deliver an attack on his lines of communication from Western Asia. This would cause the northern forces to retreat to Palestine, as indicated by the prophecies, and so mass his forces for the final conflict at Armageddon.

The result of this great battle is that the King of the North is utterly defeated. "And he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holymountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

According to this view, therefore, the war culminating in the battle of Armageddon will be fought primarily over what is known in political circles as the Near Eastern question. At one time it did indeed seem that nothing short of a terrible war between Britain and Russia would produce a settlement of the points at issue. But present events make it reasonable to

hope at least that a solution of the problem will be found at the end of the present war. Unless that solution is found it is to be feared that eventually war between Britain and Russia will be inevitable. The problem is admittedly a difficult one, and has been the occasion of much bloodshed in the past. It will have to be approached in a spirit of broad tolerance on both sides.

In any case, there are many objections against the interpretation of the prophecies which declares that such a war is inevitable. It necessitates the assumption that there will not be an individual Antichrist as well as a symbolical one, and, as has been shown, there is ample justification for the expectation of the prophecies concerning the Antichrist to receive a literal fulfilment. There will not be two literal Armageddons. The symbolical Antichrist will receive his quietus at a symbolical Armageddon. Literal Armageddon will receive its fulfilment in the career of the literal Antichrist ; and it is impossible to discern any of the features of that individual in Britain's present ally, the Tsar of Russia.

It is well, however, that the interpretation set out above should receive attention, if only to warn us that the most critical time for the future of Europe will be when the final settlement of the war is being discussed and arranged.

CONCLUSION

WHAT is the conclusion to be drawn from all these various theories which have been built up on the interpretation of the prophecies contained in the Bible? Some will say that many of them are at variance one with another, that there appears to be a certain amount of support for all of them, and therefore but little profit can be derived from them. We cannot agree with this "wait and see" attitude. Some of the interpretations will doubtless prove to be faulty, but, on the other hand, some will quite likely prove to be correct. Prophecies were given to us for a purpose. They are intended to prepare us for the future. The future is always the most important period. The past and present cannot be altered, but the moulding of the future of our souls lies in our own hands. To disregard the prophecies because they do not give the course of the future with the definiteness of a history-book is to fall into the error of the unwise virgins. To attain salvation, it is necessary to do something more than keep the Ten Commandments and to go to church or chapel once a week. The Evil One is still a power on the earth, and his wiles are many. To safeguard ourselves, we must be prepared for whatever the future has in store for us, lest at some great crisis we find ourselves in doubt as to our right course of action. Is not he most likely to remain steadfast in faith who follows the behest of the Saviour and searches the Scriptures? But he must search them in the proper spirit. He must remember that God is

divine, and that the human understanding is far from perfect. He will approach the Scriptures with reverence and with an open mind. He will reject none and mark all. Thus and thus only will he be prepared when the hour arrives. He will mark the prophecies, and the interpretations which may be put upon them. He will mark how this and that event fulfil the words of the Scriptures, and so he will be ever watchful and ever prepared for what is to come.

But the greatest conclusion that can be drawn from all these interpretations is that the Word of God is indeed divine. The mere fact that we can derive comfort and hope from the words of the prophets of old in our wars of the twentieth century is irrefutable evidence that the Scriptures are not for an age, but for all time. We can find in the Word of God references to ourselves, to our hopes and fears, and to the events which are actually happening before our eyes, just as the Israelites could find references to the events of two and three thousand years ago. Is it not a miracle worthy indeed of the God of hosts that we should be able to say this with truth of a Book which was completed nearly two thousand years ago?

To your Bibles, O ye Britons !

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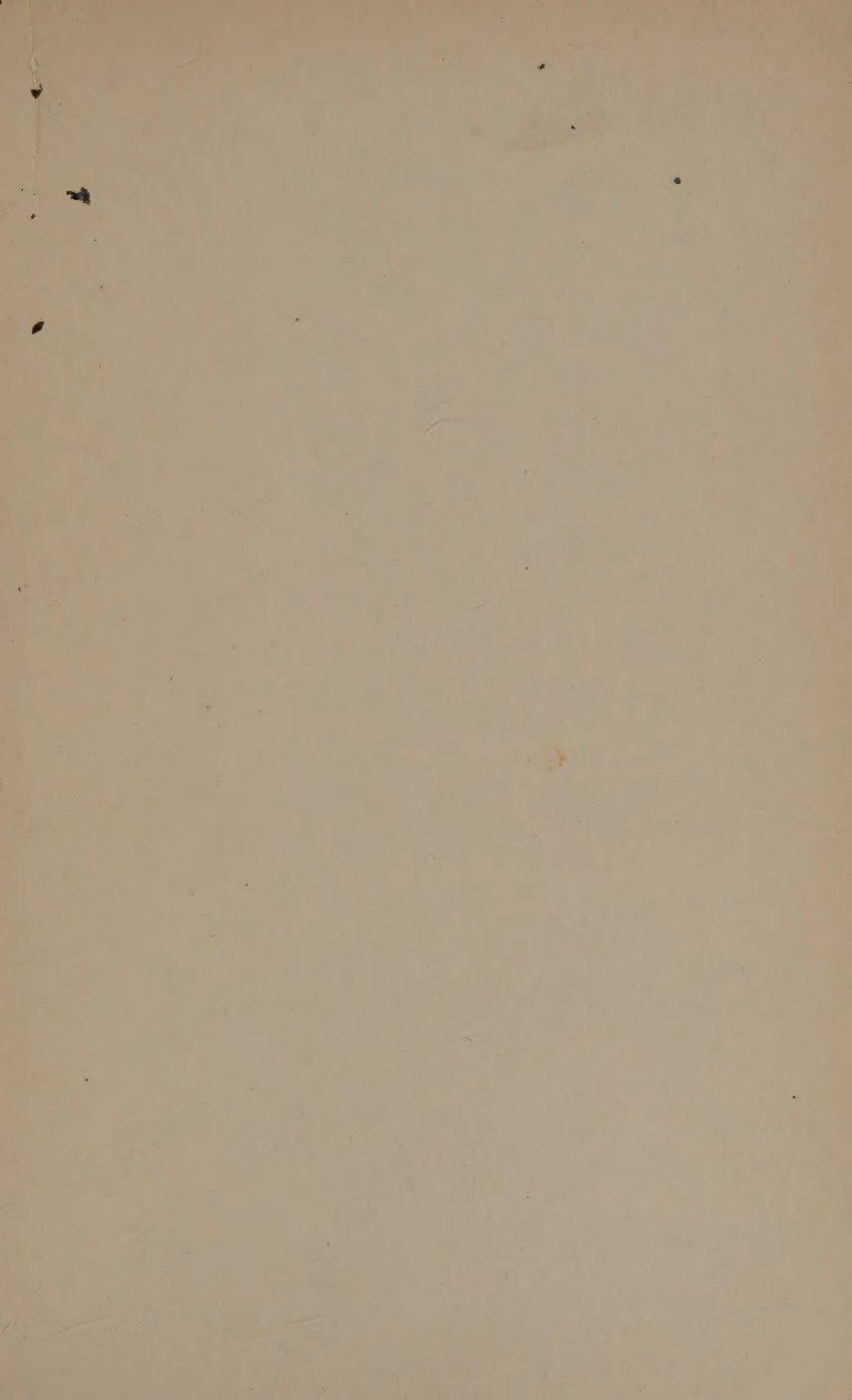
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